



Department  
for Business  
Innovation & Skills

**FURTHER EDUCATION COMMISSIONER**

Annual Report 2013/14

NOVEMBER 2014

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# Foreword

A resilient, high quality, Further Education sector is vital to ensure that young people and adults receive the education and training they need to progress into meaningful, long-term employment, and to provide employers with a skilled, motivated workforce. The majority of colleges do this well, and some match the best in the world. For the small number of colleges where there is poor quality or finances, I am committed to ensuring that rapid and robust action is taken to secure improvements.



Dr David Collins was appointed as the first Further Education Commissioner in November 2013. The role of the FE Commissioner is to assess the capacity and capability of the governance and leadership, recognising that the strength – and the weaknesses – start and end with the governance and leadership, to deliver improvement. Where there are concerns, the FE Commissioner sets out the action that is needed to bring about sustainable improvement to the quality of provision and the financial position of the college for the benefit of learners, employers and local communities.

The FE Commissioner has had a very busy year, and he has proved himself to be extremely effective in the role; approaching it both with sensitivity and an unbending focus on the needs of learners.

The eleven colleges referred to him between 1st August 2013 and 31st July 2014 have made, for the most part, encouraging progress. In doing so, many have had to make difficult decisions over staffing, the curriculum offer and their future. While there is no doubt that the FE Sector faces a number of challenges, I am confident that it has the resilience to continue to deliver high quality vocational education, and that intervention, when it does happen, will be efficient, robust and effective in driving up standards.

I would like to thank him and his team for this report and for their excellent work with the FE sector.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nick Boles'.

**NICK BOLES MP**  
**Minister for Skills and Equalities**

# The Role of the Commissioner

The role of the FE Commissioner was set out in “*Rigour and Responsiveness in Skills*” (April 2013). Through “*Intervention in Further Education: The strengthened intervention process*” (April 2014) the intervention process was described in detail. Both documents are available at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk).

The trigger points for FE Commissioner intervention are: an inadequate Ofsted inspection; and/or failure to meet national minimum standards of performance; and/or an inadequate assessment for financial health or financial control as identified by the Skills Funding Agency. The FE Commissioner intervenes in FE Colleges, designated institutions and local authority maintained FE institutions.

## The Assessment Process

When a case goes to the FE Commissioner he assesses the capacity and capability of the current governance and leadership to deliver rapid improvement. This assessment takes place over a two week period.

The FE Commissioner considers the relevant available information and data on the college or other institution subject to FE Commissioner intervention and takes account of the views of the staff and learners, local stakeholders, Ofsted, the Departments (DfE and BIS), and the Funding Agencies (Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency).

He then recommends the action needed to secure improvement to the Minister and the Chief Executives of the Funding Agencies. The college or institution is charged with developing and implementing an action plan for implementing the FE Commissioner’s recommendations. In determining his recommendations the FE Commissioner considers the suite of interventions set out in ‘*Rigour and Responsiveness in Skills*’ and any other actions that may be appropriate to secure improvement. In undertaking his assessments, the FE Commissioner is supported by FE Advisers, who have expertise in a range of areas including finance and quality.



The colleges subject to an intervention in 2013/14 enrolled more than 100,000 students and had a combined budget of over £150million.

This Annual Report summarises the recommendations and lessons learned arising from each of the FE Commissioner's interventions. It covers the period from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2013 to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2014, with updates on the progress made by each of the colleges assessed to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2014.

Summaries of the key developments are outlined in Annex A and a more detailed analysis of the recommendations made and the present position are provided in Annex B.

# Scope and Extent of Activity

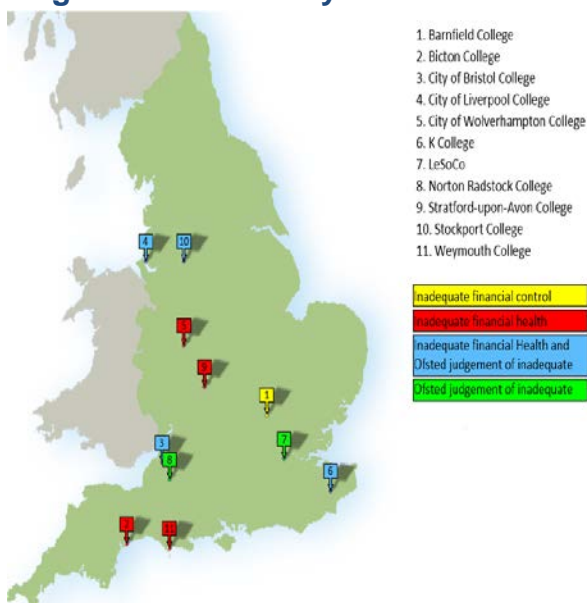
Over the period 1<sup>st</sup> August 2013 to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2014 eleven cases were referred to the FE Commissioner. Of those, four were triggered by an inadequate OFSTED inspection and seven because of financial concerns.

## The Colleges visited

The eleven colleges assessed were:

- Barnfield College
- Bicton College
- City of Bristol College
- City of Liverpool College
- City of Wolverhampton College
- K College
- LeSoCo (Lewisham and Southwark)
- Norton Radstock College
- Stratford upon Avon College
- Stockport College
- Weymouth College

Map of the colleges visited between August 2013 and July 2014



Each of the colleges visited was subject to a two week intervention/ review. In Bicton College, Norton Radstock College, Stockport College and Weymouth College a more detailed Structure and Prospects Appraisal was carried out. K College, Norton Radstock College, Stockport College and Weymouth College were subject to administered college status. Reports on each of the cases reviewed are available at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk).

In addition the FE Commissioner attended regular “case conferences” on all the colleges under review and carried out formal Stocktake Assessments on five of those assessed.

In 2013/2014, the FE Commissioner also sent two letters to the sector outlining the lessons learned from the early interventions – one on leadership and governance and one on financial matters. A further letter on the subject of quality improvement was published in October 2014. Electronic copies of the letters are available at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk).

# Actions Taken

## Summary Reports

Each of the FE Commissioner's assessments leads to a report to the Minister for Skills and Equalities. In many cases the action has led to changes of governance and leadership.

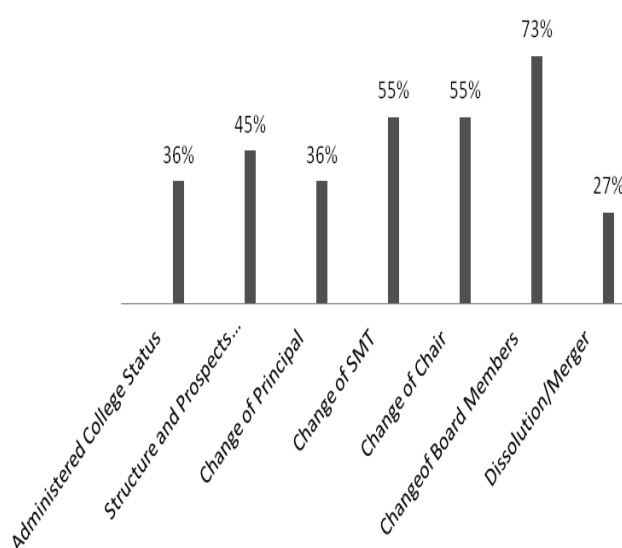
## Stocktake Assessments

During this reporting period, stocktake Assessments have been carried out in City of Bristol College, LeSoCo, City of Liverpool College, Stratford upon Avon College and City of Wolverhampton College.

In each case significant progress has been made since the original assessment. The City of Bristol College and the City of Liverpool College are no longer considered by Ofsted to be Inadequate (LeSoCo will be re-inspected in due course) and the majority of those colleges have demonstrated significant improvement in their financial position. In the case of the City of Liverpool College the Minister has signed off the case and the College is no longer subject to FE Commissioner led intervention and no further monitoring by the FE Commissioner is considered to be necessary.

Stocktake Assessments will be carried out in the remaining colleges subject to FE Commissioner intervention over the next few months and second visits at the end of the academic year will be completed with a view to ending FE Commissioner led intervention where appropriate.

Table summarising the actions taken



## Structure and Prospects Appraisals

In Bicton College, Norton Radstock College, Stockport College and Weymouth College the FE Commissioner has led a Structure and Prospects Appraisal. This looks at the future delivery model options for the college and takes place over a period of up to three months. More information on the Structure and Prospects Appraisal process can be found at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk).

In each of the four cases a Steering Group, consisting of members of the governing body, the Principal of the college, representatives of the funding agencies and chaired by the FE Commissioner, met on three to five occasions.

The Steering Group considers the various possible options for the future of the college and in the case of a possible new partnerships, merger or dissolution receives presentations from each of the interested parties. At the end of the Appraisal a recommendation is made to the governing body of the college and to the Minister.

Following Ministerial agreement the college is responsible for implementing the outcome. Stockport College, Bicton College, Norton Radstock College and Weymouth College have each been subject to a Structure and Prospects Appraisal. K College carried out a Structure and Prospects Appraisal under the previous intervention process and the implementation was overseen by the FE Commissioner.

As a result of these appraisals, K College (now West Kent and Ashford College) is working in collaboration with the Hadlow College Group to deliver provision in Tonbridge and Ashford, the remaining provision having transferred to East Kent College. Bicton College will dissolve in order to become part of the Cornwall College Group. Norton Radstock College will be merging with one of three possible partners.

Stockport College continues as an independent institution with a revised board membership, a new Principal and management team and a revised curriculum offer.

The Structure and Prospects Appraisal relating to Weymouth College is currently in its early stages and has yet to reach a conclusion.

## **Administered College Status**

Administered College status applies when it is considered that the existing leadership and management team are unable to lead the significant changes that are needed, while maintaining the quality of provision for learners. Additional guidance and support are provided by the FE Advisers to assist in the process.

In the course of the year three colleges were placed into administered college status by the Minister following an FE Commissioner intervention; K College, Stockport College, and Norton Radstock College. A fourth college (Weymouth College) was placed into administered college status in August 2014 when it was deemed that insufficient progress was being made in implementing the action plan.

In each case additional senior management staff were brought in to safeguard the provision for students while a detailed Structure and Prospects Appraisal was carried out.



These temporary arrangements are maintained until a long term solution to the issues causing concern has been determined.

# Lessons Learned

**There are a number of lessons that can be learned from this year's interventions, not least of which is that even in colleges suffering from financial difficulties or poor quality there are often areas of excellent practice.**

**There are a number of common issues, however, which when addressed have brought about significant and sustainable changes.**

## The Role of the Clerk

In the colleges visited there were widely different interpretations of the role of the clerk and as a result significant differences in the amount of time spent on supporting the Board. The salaries of clerks also varied widely.

In colleges where clerking issues have been identified the main problems have arisen from a limited interpretation of what is required to enable the Board to carry out its duties effectively. The role of a clerk in the further education sector should go much further than the keeping of records, setting of agendas and co-ordinating the production of reports. In a number of the colleges visited, however, this was the extent of the clerk's role.

At the top of the list of key duties there is the need to ensure that the Board has the right skills mix for it to be able to understand, monitor and challenge the senior team.

This requires a regular, detailed skills audit of the existing membership and an open and transparent selection process for new members if gaps are found.

There are also a number of operational concerns arising out of different interpretations of the role.

Some clerks, for example, still have responsibilities in the management of the college, which could lead to a conflict of interest. In other cases the Clerk works closely with, and reports to, the Principal. To ensure independence the Clerk should report directly to the Chair.



Bakery students at the City of Liverpool College which has turned around its financial performance and quality by concentrating on meeting the needs of employers

Effective clerking is an essential component of good governance and in a number of the colleges visited it fell well below what is needed.

- The salary of a Clerk to the Corporation ranges from under £21,000 a year to over £50,000 a year (full time equivalent)
- 79% of clerks are part-time
- 35% of Clerks work for more than one college
- 24% of clerks have another role in the college

*Source: AoC Clerks' Conference*

## Governance

All the governing bodies of the colleges under review contained talented and able individuals who gave of their time to support the college for which they were responsible.

In some of the intervention cases the balance of the board as a whole, however, was not appropriate and there were no clear policies to revise and refresh the membership at regular intervals. Some chairs had been in post for more than a decade, two for more than twenty years. Although there are no hard and fast rules, good practice would point to a maximum of eight years as a board member, less than half of which might be as chair. A number of the boards were also weak in their employer representation.

In all of the colleges assessed, skills gaps among the Board members could be identified – more often than not in the areas of finance and knowledge of further education. Regular governor appraisals of performance were usually missing, as were detailed skills audits.

In a number of cases the appointment of new members did not follow an open and transparent process and induction programmes had not covered the full range of a governor's role and responsibilities.



Agritech students at Bicton College that is to become part of the Cornwall College Group

Many of the boards were also working in relative isolation, having little or no contact with other colleges or any experience of how other boards operated.

Perhaps the most worrying weakness, however, was the lack of communication channels with the staff and students of the college, other than through the Principal, with the danger that only one view would be presented when important decisions were to be taken.

In some cases there were insufficient senior post holders with access to the corporation to allow alternative views to be expressed or regular contact with those delivering the provision to understand how the college was operating. In all colleges where it was not found to be the case a recommendation was made that the senior manager responsible for finance should be a senior post holder.

#### **Lessons from the Board room**

- There is no difference in performance from Boards following a Carver model of governance, or a more traditional committee based approach
- It is more important that boards have the necessary skills to deal with the complexities of a multi-million pound business than being “representative”
- The difference between strategic direction and operational management does not mean that board members should avoid taking a detailed interest in how the college operates.

## **Leadership and Management**

The FE sector has many talented and successful leaders who compare well with the best found in private or public sector organisations. Nevertheless, a number of Principals have reached their position without having developed the breadth of skills necessary to be the accounting officer for a multi-million pound organisation in difficult times.

Not only are Principals responsible as the accounting officers for the use of public funds, they are also expected to be the main curriculum leaders for the organisation as a whole. Where there are gaps in knowledge or experience these need to be urgently addressed soon after appointment.

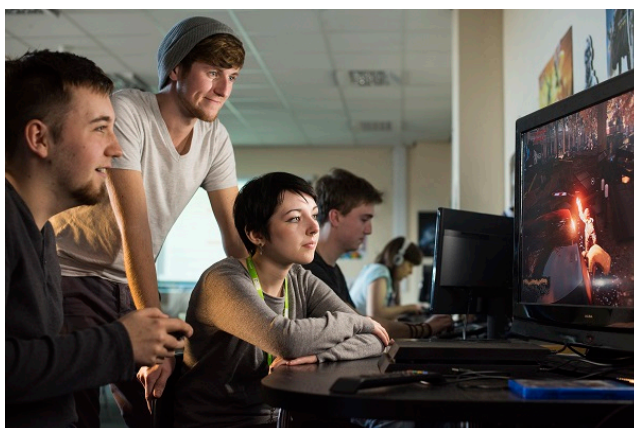
If the senior team is balanced with individuals with complementary talents this may be less of a problem but if this is not the case it is highly unlikely that the organisation will be successful.

The fact remains that Principals need a grounding in all aspects of a college's operations if they are to ensure high quality and financial stability. In more than one of the cases referred during the year, a lack of finance expertise in particular has been the cause of major problems.

When a new Principal is appointed there are therefore benefits in a Principal level mentor being allocated to support the new leader in their first year of office. This is of particular importance if the Principal has been recruited from outside the sector or has limited experience of the full range of areas for which he or she is responsible.

Problems have also arisen because new projects, led by the Principal, have been undertaken that go beyond the main purpose of the college without the necessary scrutiny or cost-benefit analysis. Too often the risks in new ventures are underplayed and the envisaged benefits over optimistic.

Some leadership and management teams have also lacked balance and cohesion. Communication channels have been weak and staff members have referred to their senior managers as "invisible".



Games Development is just one of the new curriculum areas being developed as part of the expansion of the technology industry

Key performance indicators have been missing and there has been little or no benchmarking of the college's performance with its peers. In more than one case the Principal and the senior team had not undergone an annual appraisal or had been given any SMART targets.

#### Leadership and management in the less successful colleges are often characterised by:

- A failure of the Board to challenge the Principal
- An imbalance of skills in the senior team
- Poor communications

## Quality Improvement

What is surprising in some of the colleges visited is the lack of the essential building blocks on which quality is based.

This starts with the availability within the organisation of appropriate information on which decisions can be made, aggregated or disaggregated to appropriate levels. KPIs and dashboards which can inform and guide boards and senior teams in problem solving and decision making are often missing or incomplete and rarely contain benchmarking data.

The third letter to the sector highlighted some of the key issues. These range from ensuring that the right student is on the right course to having a structured teaching and learning observation programme, with development and support provided to individuals where necessary.



Science students at City of Bristol College where inspection grades have improved and Leadership and Management have been graded as "Good"

In a number of the interventions, performance management in particular was found to be weak and known problems had failed to be addressed until new senior managers were appointed. There seemed to be a reluctance to hold "difficult conversations" and face up to the reality of the situation.

A common occurrence was the lack of clear policies that were consistently applied across the institution. These ranged from dealing with poor attendance or student behavioural issues to how work was to be marked and student feedback given.

What was encouraging, however, was how quickly new management teams with a clear focus on the student experience have been able to turn matters around. They have in essence gone "back to basics" starting with the improvement of initial assessment and guidance, moving on to challenge and support performance in the classroom and working hard to ensure that students not only succeed on their programmes but have clear pathways to employment or progression to further study.

Despite reductions in staff numbers, long course success rates have risen, often dramatically, under new regimes. Staff members have also commented favourably on the sometimes tough actions that have been taken, suggesting that in many cases they have been long overdue.



**The three main reasons why colleges do not deliver quality provision are:**

- **A lack of focus on the needs of the learner both inside and outside of the classroom**
- **The absence of quality systems and procedures consistently applied across the college**
- **Poor performance management and the failure to deal with problems as soon as they arise**

## **Financial Health**

At the time of the FE Commissioner's assessment some colleges were suffering from years of deficit budgets and poor forecasting. In one case the college had been issued with its first notice of financial concern in 2008.

In most cases the problem could be traced back to a failure to adjust costs to falling income streams and declining student numbers. Class sizes and the contributions of curriculum areas to overheads were too low and staff costs too high – in some cases well in excess of 70% of turnover at a time when the sector average is reducing and is closer to 60%.

When issues have arisen, leaders and managers have often been too slow in their response, delaying the necessary remedial action until there is clearly no other option. This has meant that the problem has become even more difficult to solve than it would have been if it had been addressed sooner.

New management teams, however, have grasped the nettle and taken the sometimes painful decisions to reduce numbers drastically to balance the books. There is no sign that this has been accompanied by a reduction in quality – indeed the evidence from the first assessments would be the reverse. Quality as evidenced by student success rates is now higher than before, despite the fact that staffing numbers have been reduced.

Some of the problems, however, are long standing and will take time to resolve. Borrowings in the form of bank loans or advances of funding from the Skills Funding Agency have risen to 80% of turnover or more and repayments and interest payments are the main source of the college's difficulty.

For the smaller colleges, the ability to cut costs is particularly difficult and in some cases partners have had to be sought to generate economies of scale.

As funding becomes tighter, however, questions will arise as to whether some colleges will be able to continue to offer the breadth of curriculum that they have done up until now.

There is a danger that they will concentrate on those programmes that are less resource intensive and move away from the more expensive practically based areas. What therefore is a sensible business decision for an individual college may not be in the best interests of meeting the employment needs of the area.



Bricklaying students at the City of Wolverhampton College which has turned an operating loss of £1.5m into an operating surplus in twelve months

#### Financial difficulties often occur because:

- Colleges are over-optimistic with regard to their ability to grow and reluctant to cut costs
- Class sizes are too small
- New technologies have not been applied to reduce staffing levels, particularly amongst support staff



# Conclusions

**The first assessments by the FE Commissioner do not give a “typical” view of how the sector is performing. Colleges and institutions are only referred when there are serious quality or financial issues that need to be addressed. They do, however, give clues as to why things go wrong and more importantly how they can be put right.**

Despite serious difficulties, in many cases inherited from previous leadership teams, the hard work of staff across each of the colleges and institutions is producing significant and rapid turnarounds for the benefit of learners.

Internal staff changes and on occasion structural adjustments have had to be made but the results have been improved outcomes for learners and employers and lessons from which the whole sector can benefit.

## Looking ahead

**It would be foolish to pretend that the Further Education sector does not have a difficult time ahead.**

Reductions in public spending will necessarily continue for the foreseeable future and the demands for highly skilled individuals to service a growing economy will increase.

It therefore remains important to recognise the key role that the sector plays in the economic development of the nation and the function that colleges and institutions need to fulfil, both individually and collectively, in driving change and reform.

When resources are short it is all the more important that colleges and institutions work together to ensure that those resources are best used for the benefit of learners and employers.

This will mean some consolidation and indeed some specialisation, as well as neighbouring colleges, institutions and providers considering joint plans for their respective communities.

There is a danger that without such a consideration the more expensive areas of the curriculum (for example, science and engineering) will disappear from areas where they are needed in a college's pursuit of financial stability.

The role of leadership teams will become even more challenging in balancing quality considerations with budget constraints whilst at the same time meeting the needs of their

communities. The history of the sector, however, shows that whatever the challenge, boards and senior management teams are capable of rising to the occasion.

Few people would disagree that the Further Education Sector is essential to the development of the economy and ensuring social mobility. As such it needs to provide high quality teaching and learning within the resources available. The interventions over the past year, however, have flagged up the work that in some colleges is still to be done.

# Annex A: Table of key changes resulting from the FE Commissioner interventions

College	Key changes
<b>Barnfield</b>  <i>Inadequate Financial Controls</i>	<p>The dissolution of the Barnfield Federation and the split off of the Academies has been agreed in principle, subject to finances and local consultation.</p> <p>A new Principal/CEO has been appointed.</p>
<b>Bicton College</b>  <i>Inadequate Financial Health</i>	<p>Following a Structure and Prospects Appraisal the proposal for the dissolution of Bicton College and merger with Cornwall College has been agreed with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2015.</p>
<b>City of Bristol College</b>  <i>Ofsted Grading of 'Inadequate'</i>	<p>The College has been re-inspected by OFSTED since the FE Commissioner's visit and is no longer considered to be inadequate. Leadership and Management were graded as "Good". Progress is being made on financial recovery.</p>
<b>City of Liverpool College</b>  <i>Ofsted Grading of 'Inadequate'</i>  <i>Inadequate Financial Health</i>	<p>The College has been re-inspected by OFSTED since the FE Commissioner's assessment and is no longer considered to be inadequate.</p> <p>The College has made significant progress in delivering a financial recovery plan and has succeeded in moving from a cash operating deficit to a surplus in 12 months.</p>
<b>City of Wolverhampton College</b>  <i>Inadequate Financial Health</i>	<p>The college has improved its financial position considerably, moving from a trading loss in 2012/2013 to a trading surplus in 2013/2014.</p>
<b>K College</b>  <i>Ofsted Grading of 'Inadequate'</i>  <i>Inadequate Financial Health</i>	<p>K College provision has partly transferred to East Kent College. The remainder is being delivered in collaboration with Hadlow College.</p>

College	Key changes
<b>Lewisham and Southwark College</b>  <i>Ofsted Grading of 'Inadequate'</i>  <i>Inadequate Financial Health</i>	<b>New Board members and a new interim senior management team are in place, pending the appointment of a new Principal.</b>
<b>Norton Radstock College</b>  <i>Ofsted Grading of 'Inadequate'</i>	<b>A Structure and Prospects Appraisal has been completed and a recommendation for a merger partner made to Ministers.</b>
<b>Stratford Upon Avon College</b>  <i>Inadequate Financial Health</i>	<b>The College has made significant progress in delivering a financial recovery plan and has succeeded in moving from a cash operating deficit to a surplus in 12 months. The corporation membership and College leadership team has changed substantially.</b>
<b>Stockport College of Further and Higher Education</b>  <i>Ofsted Grading of 'Inadequate'</i>  <i>Inadequate Financial Health</i>	<b>The College has revised its mission to become a purely vocational college focused on meeting the needs of the area, with a reduction in size from c£30m to c£25m.</b>  <b>New interim management arrangements are in place pending the appointment of a permanent Principal.</b>
<b>Weymouth</b>  <i>Inadequate Financial Health</i>	<b>A Structure and Prospects Appraisal is currently in progress to determine the best way forward for the provision of high quality, financially viable education and training in the area.</b>

# Annex B: Table of recommendations made and progress to date

Barnfield Recommendations	Progress to date
A refreshed governing body with the composition consisting of no more than 50% of existing members.	The College continues to implement the FE Commissioner's recommendations.
The appointment of a permanent Chair with the skills and experience to lead the organisation and the appointment of a new Chair of the Finance and Employment Committee, drawn from the new membership.	A new corporation with a new Chair is now in place.
The appointment of a new independent Clerk that reports to the Chair of the Corporation.	New Clerking arrangements have been put in place.
Revised Senior Management Structure attracting salaries commensurate with sector norms.	Salaries of senior staff have been reduced in line with sector norms.
All senior posts should be advertised nationally. In the meantime Interim arrangements should be put in place.	The existing Interim Chief Executives were replaced by an experienced Interim Chief Executive/Principal.
The Principal of Barnfield College should be the Accounting Officer for the College and have the powers and responsibilities appropriate to a Principal.	The College advertised for a new permanent Chief Executive/Principal and made an appointment early in the autumn term.
The Executive Director – Group Finance should develop and apply revised financial regulations as a matter of urgency to provide appropriate checks and balances on expenditure by individuals including a process of sign off by the Board of the Corporation.	New (and appropriate) financial regulations and controls are now in operation.

<b>Bicton College</b> <b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Progress to date</b>
<p>A Structure and Prospects Appraisal, led by the FE Commissioner, should be carried out within the next three months to identify appropriate partnership/merger arrangements that will allow for the continuation and development of land based provision in the area. In considering potential partners, the quality of the college's offer and the needs of local stakeholders and learners will be paramount in determining the most appropriate way forward.</p> <p>The College should develop a detailed commercial plan to determine the best ways to capitalise on its extensive facilities and estate. It should aim to increase its commercial income significantly by drawing on best practice from other land based colleges and apply a professional project management approach and cost benefit analysis to any new venture.</p> <p>The Board should establish a separate Finance and Resources committee to scrutinize the college's financial performance on a monthly basis until such times as the present situation is resolved. The Committee should ensure that it has members who are financially qualified, either drawn from their existing membership or co-opted as appropriate.</p>	<p>The College has complied with all the FE Commissioner's recommendations, and is now implementing the outcomes of the Structure and Prospects Appraisal.</p> <p>A Structure and Prospects Appraisal has been completed. Three possible merger partners were identified. Each submitted a formal proposal and made presentations to the SPA Steering Group, consisting of members of the Board of Bicton College and representatives of BIS, the SFA and the EFA.</p> <p>Evaluations of these proposals, including their relative costs, were carried out, with a recommendation to the Minister in mid-October.</p> <p>The Minister has approved the Bicton College merger with Cornwall College Group.</p> <p>Discussions are also taking place to develop the commercial opportunities afforded by the college's estate.</p>

<b>City of Bristol College</b> <b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Progress to date</b>
<p>The College has the capacity and capability to deliver quality improvement and financial recovery, and the College should continue to lead its own recovery.</p> <p>This decision is subject to the College meeting</p>	<p>The College continues to implement the FE Commissioner's recommendations.</p>

City of Bristol College Recommendations	Progress to date
<p>three conditions:</p> <p>The College must provide regular information to the funding bodies, through the Skills Funding Agency, on the implementation and impact of the Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) showing that the actions are delivering quality improvement.</p> <p>The College must provide regular information to the Skills Funding Agency that it is on track to return to surplus in AY 2014/15 and that all additional debt or advanced funding required to support the recovery is cleared in accordance with the agreed repayment schedule.</p> <p>The College secures a 'requires improvement' or better overall grade at its next inspection.</p>	<p>The College's post inspection plan has led to significant improvements in the quality of provision.</p> <p>Progress continues to be made in addressing the financial issues that the college faces and reducing its staffing in line with sector norms.</p> <p>Rationalisation of the college estate is planned for 2014/2015.</p> <p>The College has been re-inspected and is no longer judged to be inadequate. Leadership and Management are now considered to be "good" (Grade 2).</p>

City of Liverpool College Recommendations	Progress to date
<p>Governance arrangements at the College need to be improved, with additional, high level expertise in finance and further education and training added. Levels of appointment need to be raised to reflect the College's position as a £46m business (£63m including First4Skills) and to provide the necessary monitoring and oversight of the Executive.</p>	<p>The College has complied with the FE Commissioners' recommendations and it no longer subject to FE Commissioner intervention.</p> <p>Board membership has been improved with the appointment of a new chair and new members with education and financial</p>

<p>The SFA and EFA should attend Board meetings as observers until such time as the financial and qualitative problems of the college have been fully resolved.</p> <p>The existing Senior Leadership Team should be allowed to continue to transform the College but with greater scrutiny and challenge by both the Board and the relevant agencies. The Principal would benefit from the support of an independent Principal/ex Principal with experience of developing outstanding provision.</p> <p>The College should appoint a permanent well qualified and able Director of Finance at the earliest possible opportunity to strengthen its senior management.</p> <p>No further funded growth should be allowed or substantive new projects undertaken until such time as outcomes for students are judged as good.</p>	<p>expertise.</p> <p>The SFA and EFA have attended Board meetings until the summer term of 2014, at which point it was agreed that the issues causing concern had been addressed.</p> <p>The college's financial returns for 2013/2014 show a return to a significant surplus on the income and expenditure account.</p> <p>The Principal has made links with a number of Principals in the sector who are delivering outstanding provision.</p> <p>A new permanent Director of Finance has been appointed.</p> <p>The College has been re-inspected by OFSTED and is no longer judged to be inadequate.</p>
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City of Wolverhampton College	Progress to date
Recommendations	
<p>The Board should continue with its plans to increase the business expertise amongst its membership and develop further its links programme with the managers and curriculum areas of the college</p> <p>The existing management should be supported in continuing the process of transformation and recovery through the current monitoring and review processes delivered by the funding agencies</p> <p>The Commissioner should carry out a monitoring assessment in autumn 2014 to review the qualitative and financial outturns for 2013/14 and the enrolment position for 2014/15 and to decide if any further action is necessary</p>	<p>The College has complied with all the FE Commissioner's recommendations.</p> <p>Excellent progress has been made both in the areas of quality improvement and financial recovery.</p> <p>The college has returned a surplus in 2013/2014, after having taken account of significant redundancy costs. The college continues to manage the advances provided by the Agency.</p> <p>Success rates have risen by more</p>



<b>City of Wolverhampton College</b>	<b>Progress to date</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	
	than 8% and teaching and learning observations are showing a much higher level of good and outstanding teaching.

<b>K College</b>	<b>Progress to date</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	
<p>There is an urgent need to secure alternative providers through a managed solution</p> <p>The current Executive team needs strengthening if it is to deliver the outcomes of a Structure and Prospects Appraisal.</p> <p>The current governing body needs refreshing, with additional skills and expertise brought in to support the delivery of the outcomes of a Structure and Prospects Appraisal</p> <p>The College and the Skills Funding Agency should work together to implement the managed solution to secure alternative providers, and deal with the assets and liabilities of the Corporation.</p> <p>The College should develop a comprehensive transition plan.</p>	<p>The College has complied with all the FE Commissioner's recommendations.</p> <p>K College is working with Hadlow College Group to deliver provision in Tonbridge and Ashford. East Kent College, has assumed responsibility for provision in their respective new areas from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2014.</p>

<b>LeSoCo (Lewisham and Southwark)</b>	<b>Progress to date</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	
<p>The Board of the College is recently formed. Broadly speaking they are well skilled and willing to challenge. However the Board should continue to refresh, ensuring representation from local business/employers. The Board should also have representatives at leader or executive director level from both Lewisham and</p>	<p>The College continues to implement the FE Commissioner's recommendations.</p> <p>Board numbers have been reduced from 19 to 15 and a new skills based corporation has been in</p>

<b>LeSoCo (Lewisham and Southwark)</b>  <b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Progress to date</b>
<p>Southwark Borough Councils. The Board should also develop and implement a succession plan for the post of chair</p> <p>The Board should review the capacity of the current senior management team. As a minimum and as a matter of urgency, the Board should strengthen capacity in the areas of quality improvement and resource management. The Board should also develop and implement a succession plan for the post of Principal</p> <p>The existing Post Inspection Action Plan should be revisited and enhanced by the inclusion of specific timelines and milestones. More emphasis should be given to the need to improve functional skills and a functional skills audit of vocational staff should be carried out, followed up by supportive CPD where necessary.</p> <p>A revised curriculum plan is needed to demonstrate how the needs of students at all levels will be met as each stage of the estate's strategy is implemented. More attention should also be given to the total learner experience of those currently enrolled at the college.</p> <p>A detailed analysis of staff numbers and utilisation on both the teaching and support side of the college's operations should be conducted as a matter of urgency to bring the college's expenditure in this area to within sector norms. The harmonisation of pay and conditions should be a priority, together with agreements on common policies and procedures.</p> <p>The college's somewhat precarious financial position should be addressed by developing a more accurate and realistic financial forecast, together with detailed and costed plans to bring the college into</p>	<p>operation from September 1<sup>st</sup> 2014. A new Chair will be taking up post in March 2015.</p> <p>The Principal and two of the three Vice Principals have stepped down and have been replaced by a new Interim Recovery team.</p> <p>The Post Inspection Action Plan has been replaced by a more relevant College Recovery Plan and staffing numbers are being reduced in line with the college's curriculum requirements.</p> <p>The Curriculum plan has been revised in the light of the views of key stakeholders and the needs of the area. Better support mechanisms for students have been put in place.</p> <p>To date 57 surplus posts have been identified, with a further 35 redundancies anticipated in the next financial year. In total these and other changes are expected to save in the region of £6m annually.</p> <p>The college has produced a financial recovery plan to address the issues raised in the assessment.</p>

<b>LeSoCo (Lewisham and Southwark)</b>  <b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Progress to date</b>
<p>break even within two years. This should be completed within the next three months.</p> <p>A communications strategy should be developed and implemented that allows for meaningful consultation on key issues with both internal and external stakeholders.</p>	<p>A new permanent Principal is currently being recruited.</p> <p>New channels of communication have been opened up, both within the college and with external stakeholders.</p>

<b>Norton Radstock College</b>  <b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Progress to date</b>
<p>The College should be placed in Administered College status with immediate effect.</p> <p>A Structure and Prospects Appraisal should be carried out in the next three months with a view to identifying a suitable merger partner. The Structure and Prospects Appraisal will take account of the Strategic Options Review currently being undertaken by Baker Tilley.</p> <p>The capacity and capability of the senior team requires urgent attention. The College should ensure the senior leadership team has access to the skills and experiences to deliver the outcome of the Structure and Prospects Appraisal, making any necessary changes as a matter of urgency.</p> <p>The Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) needs further refinement to capture quantitative success criteria and in year milestones. Its monitoring and review needs significant adjustments to create whole staff ownership. Governor involvement in the monitoring of the PIAP should sit within existing committee structures.</p> <p>An FE Adviser should monitor and review the college's progress in implementing the FE Commissioner's recommendations, with a</p>	<p>The College continues to implement the FE Commissioner's recommendations.</p> <p>A Structure and Prospects Appraisal has been completed. A merger partner for the college has been identified and a recommendation made to the Minister.</p> <p>Additional support has been given to the senior management team to enable it to deal with the problems it faces.</p> <p>A new Post Inspection Action Plan has been drawn up.</p> <p>An FE Adviser has been assigned to review and challenge the college's progress</p>

<p>particular focus on ensuring that the Post Inspection Action Plan is effectively revised, implemented and monitored.</p> <p>A new Performance Management framework is required so that accountabilities and targets for all staff can be identified and regularly monitored.</p> <p>The College should review both the scope and quality of sub-contracted provision and ensure that adequate risk mitigation plans are in place.</p>	<p>through its transition process.</p>
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Stratford upon Avon College	Progress to date
Recommendations	
<p>A training programme for Board members should be provided that looks at how high performing college Boards operate. The lessons from elsewhere should then be implemented.</p> <p>Clerking arrangements need to be improved and the cost of clerking reduced.</p> <p>Progress towards quality improvement and financial recovery should be reviewed in October when the outturns for 2013/14 and the initial enrolment numbers for 2014/15 are known. If insufficient progress has been made in these areas, a Structure and Prospects Appraisal should be carried out, led by the FE Commissioner.</p>	<p>The College has complied with all the FE Commissioner's recommendations</p> <p>Following the resignation of the Board a new Board has been established and an appropriate training programme drawn up.</p> <p>The clerk has resigned and new clerking arrangements are now in place.</p> <p>A follow up stocktake assessment in October concluded that excellent progress had been made in both quality improvement and financial recovery.</p> <p>The Principal has engaged an experienced Principal as a mentor</p>

<b>Stockport College</b> <b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Progress to date</b>
<p>The College should be placed into Administered College status.</p> <p>The College Board should be refreshed with new appointments in the areas of quality in education and performance management. A member of the SFA and EFA should join the Board to provide professional oversight of the College's progress and safeguard the use of public funds. The involvement of the SFA and EFA as Board members should only continue while the College is in Administered College status and a permanent way forward is found.</p> <p>A Structure and Prospects Appraisal should take place over the period 1st January 2014 to 31st March 2014 led by the FE Commissioner and in consultation with the refreshed Board.</p> <p>The existing Senior Management Team should be supported by the addition of an Interim experienced Principal/ex Principal and Director of Quality while this review is underway to address the significant issues being faced by the current student cohort.</p> <p>Urgent discussions should be undertaken with the EFA, SFA and the Borough Council to resolve the issue of St Thomas's.</p>	<p>The College has complied with all the FE Commissioner's recommendations.</p> <p>New Board members have been appointed and the Chair has stepped down</p> <p>A Structure and Prospects Appraisal led by the FE Commissioner has been completed.</p> <p>The College has been refocused with a new Interim Principal appointed and is now concentrating its efforts on vocational education linked to the needs of Stockport and the Greater Manchester Area</p> <p>A new Principal/Chief Executive is being recruited.</p> <p>Staffing numbers are being reduced in line with sector norms and the college has delivered a £4m reduction in size (from c£30m to c£25m turnover).</p> <p>Consideration is being given to entering into a formal federation with other colleges in the region</p>

<b>Weymouth College</b> <b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Progress to date</b>
<p>The Chair should refresh the membership of the Board with new members bringing financial and FE expertise.</p> <p>The Board should develop and implement a targeted training programme to enable them to understand better the FE sector and the contribution that the Board can make to the college's development.</p> <p>The Principal should engage a "peer mentor" with a good financial track record to assist her in dealing with the college's present financial situation.</p> <p>The Principal should appoint a senior post holder with financial expertise to join the Senior Leadership Team.</p> <p>The Chair and Principal should conduct a skills analysis of the Senior Leadership Team and then implement a training programme to ensure that staff have the necessary financial skills to address the college's current difficulties. If any subsequent training is deemed not to have resolved the issues highlighted in the assessment report, the Chair and Principal should consider their continuing role within the college.</p> <p>The Senior Leadership Team should produce a detailed curriculum plan for 2014/15 and ensure that it is resourced efficiently. They should then produce a revised recovery plan which is both realistic and consistent with the curriculum offer. In the light of the Senior Leadership Team's skills gaps in this area, and the urgency of the task, the College should secure additional resources to enable this work to be done.</p> <p>The Senior Leadership Team should also review its risk management processes in the light of the experience of the last two years and ensure that they are robust.</p> <p>The College should be closely monitored by the Commission on a monthly basis until the financial issues have been fully addressed.</p>	<p>Improvements to the membership of the Board are being addressed</p> <p>A number of new Board members have been appointed</p> <p>The Principal has engaged a peer mentor with financial expertise</p> <p>Weaknesses in the senior management team have yet to be fully addressed.</p> <p>A new senior post holder with financial expertise is currently being sought.</p> <p>The college's recovery plan is inadequate and requires further work.</p> <p>The College has been placed into Administered College status.</p>

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