



Readers' MANIFEST



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

OCR

Oxford Cambridge and RSA



FOREWORD

As we head into the last six months before one of the most unpredictable general elections in the last century, it is clear that FE and skills are going to be on the agenda nationally, but perhaps not for the right reasons.

We have already been through a party conference season in which politicians of all political persuasions fell into that age-old trap of knowing the cost of everything, but the value of nothing.

Apprenticeships, considered by our sector to be an essential and specialist form of vocational education, have been reduced to a makeshift solution to youth unemployment, and an ill-advised race to pledge more and more apprenticeship starts has begun.

But while it seems everyone wants to talk about apprenticeships, our leaders are still uncomfortable speaking about funding for FE, or rather, the lack of it.

Without the comfort and security of the funding

ringfence enjoyed by schools, FE has been left out in the cold by government cuts and frequent changes in policy, which have placed additional administrative burdens on colleges and left lecturers, college leaders and providers even more stretched, and their learners at risk of a sub-standard education.

In the run-up to a general election, all politicians get desperate. Desperate to score points over each other, desperate to win votes by talking the public's language, and it is our job to make sure the pressure is on them to speak FE's language too.

In conducting our manifesto survey, FE Week has sought to unite our amazing and cherished sector in one voice, so we can tell those who seek public office and those who elect them what their priorities must be for vocational education and skills policy.

The results will not surprise many in the FE sector, but they make one thing very clear: we

cannot go on as we are.

The FE sector trains some of the most vulnerable young people in England. Young people who have been failed by the schools system, hung out to dry by government and left to a life of working for minimum wage, or as one of those most talked-about statistics, not in education, employment or training (Neet).

The FE sector gives those people a chance.

Our sector also gives adults, who may have been failed by a school system many decades ago, the change to come back into education and improve their prospects, and to quote at least two government ministers, there is nothing "Mickey Mouse" about qualifications which get anyone who wants to learn back into the classroom.

The FE sector also gives those people a chance.

But far from simply being a dumping ground for the leftovers of a school system which rewards only the academic achievements of learners and recognises only grades and not potential, FE also

trains some of the brightest and the best England has to offer.

More and more young people are choosing vocational pathways into highly-skilled fields such as aviation, aerospace, engineering and manufacturing, into fields like accountancy and law, where apprenticeships were once the norm, but now university is trumpeted by schools and careers advisers as the only route.

But these options are not being presented to enough young people as they go through school, and that is another thing which needs to change.

Through the results of this survey, and through the final manifesto we present at the end of this publication, the FE sector can speak with one voice, loudly enough to ensure above anything else that we cannot be ignored as the race to Number 10 reaches its conclusion.

*Shane Mann, Managing Director of Lsect Ltd,
publisher of FE Week*



SPONSOR'S MESSAGE

For too many election cycles, the education and skills system has been a political football. Through a plethora of ministerial and departmental changes of the last few decades, we've seen initiative churn and, as a result, we have a system that is too often perceived as impenetrable to the lay-person.

Our aim, through creating this manifesto with FE Week is to set a marker in the sand for the further education sector. We aim to make it easy for politicians of whichever political persuasion to access the combined wisdom and expertise of the sector.

At OCR, we understand the frustration of near-constant reform and seemingly ever-changing requirements. We recognise the need for stability for learners, for teachers and tutors and critically for the public at large. We know there is temptation to ask for just one more change; to correct that flaw that if fixed could make a huge difference. But those minor tweaks to the system cause as much instability as the more fundamental changes. They

do so because every little change has an impact on our ability to assess the effectiveness of any part of the system. No element of the education and skills system exists in a vacuum, and no change, however small, can be made without impacting other parts of the system.

We believe that there is a need for a comprehensive review of the whole system. I know you might think you've heard this before, but we're not calling for another piecemeal review that takes a part of the system as a discrete entity. We want a holistic review across the whole sector – it's a massive ask – looking at maintained schools, academies, FE colleges, UTCs, sixth form colleges, training providers, prison education programmes, adult education, work programme, job centre mandated training, young people, adults, community learning. We must ask the question, have we lost sight of the purpose they are meant to serve?

We need to create a common understanding of the routes through learning – what type of

programme different types of institutions offer and where they lead – what value do different institutions add – where does their expertise lie? Institutions cannot be everything to everyone. Only then can we expect parents, learners, employers and society to understand and put their faith in the rich diversity that FE offers. We know that one size doesn't fit all. If that is true of learners and learning styles, then we must also recognise that one type of institution, one type of qualification and one type of teaching pedagogy can never fit all either.

Accountability in the system is important but it must not be the driving force. Our effort and energy must be channelled into getting the right programme for the right learner at the right time. Institutions must be accountable, but they must be equally accountable for their successes and, critically, their failures. We cannot predicate success on picking up the pieces left by the failure of others.

It's easy for us to recommend changes, it's

easy for ministers to ask for changes to try and come up with a quick fix, but the problem is more complex and long term than we often recognise. We must heed the warnings about the changing nature of the labour market, about the need to prepare for jobs that we can't even consider yet. In order to do that we must ensure that our entire education and skills system is up to the challenge.

Primary school pupils in year five this year are experiencing the first year of the new curriculum. If these young people enter the labour market at 18, they will do so in 2023. The current cycle for qualification reform is about four to five years, so these children may not even undertake the qualifications currently under reform. We can no longer afford for education and skills policy to be set by the electoral cycle – we need a longer term plan and we must be able to stick to it.

Charlotte Bosworth Director of skills and employment, OCR

THE FE WEEK READERS' MANIFESTO - A GUIDE

The FE Week manifesto survey was conducted over a period of several weeks in October and November 2014, opening shortly after the end of party conference season.

There is nothing necessarily new in any of the 14 pledges listed on the next two pages, which were developed in consultation with 35 FE Week readers, chosen at random. In most cases, these are ideas which have been mooted before by many people in the sector, and arguments both for and against them are not unfamiliar.

The survey has allowed us to pitch those ideas back to the sector, a process which has given us a clear indication of where we have our readers' support.

Each respondent was presented with the 14 pledges, and asked whether they agreed strongly,

agreed, neither agreed nor disagreed, disagreed, strongly disagreed or had no opinion on each one.

The top five pledges which received the most support have been chosen to be the backbone of our manifesto, which will be distributed widely with FE Week, at the Association of Colleges annual conference in Birmingham and to lawmakers in Parliament.

As with previous FE Week surveys, we have been delighted with the response rate and the diversity among the 660 respondents. This was not just a survey for principals or heads of awarding bodies, this was a survey for everyone in the FE sector, and the responses reflect that.

In terms of the age range of respondents, more than one third (33.5 per cent) of surveys were filled out by those aged 45 to 54, with 26.34 per cent of

responses coming from the 55 to 64 age group, 23.2 per cent from the 35 to 44 group and less than three per cent each from the 18 to 24 group (2.9 per cent) and 65 to 74 group (2.81 per cent).

Most of the responses came from those working in FE management, with an equal split between senior and middle management, both at 33.97 per cent. The next biggest group was principals or chief executives, who made up 16.51 per cent of respondents, while 9.52 per cent of responses came from services staff.

Of the total number of responses, 2.86 per cent came from teachers and lecturers, 1.22 per cent from governors, one per cent from teaching support staff and just 0.95 per cent from civil servants.

Although this does tell us that we should

consider the majority of responses to represent a view of those in management, it is not uncommon for managers, senior or otherwise, to consult with other staff in their organisations before responding to surveys of this nature.

As well as answering the common questions, respondents were given the option to provide comments to go along with their responses. We have included some of these comments in the pages which follow along with detailed results for each pledge.

You can also read an expert view from four sector leaders, who have been given advanced insight into the results and our analysis of them, on pages 24 and 25, and you can read the finished manifesto, as informed by the survey results, on pages 26 and 27.

THE PLEDGES

1 PAGE 10

Further Education and Skills policy implementation

We propose to merge the Skills Funding Agency and Education Funding Agency in order to bring together both 16 to 18 and 19 to 24 funding streams; whilst equalising funding rates. This new funding agency would be an executive agency of one government department.

2 PAGE 11

Funding stability

We would commit to guarantee the level of funding and investment for the term of parliament to enable long term planning and stability in the sector.

3 PAGE 12

Apprenticeship Funding

We propose to reverse the current government's proposal to fund apprenticeships via employers. We will instead raise the Apprentice minimum wage from £2.68 to £3.72 for under 18s, £2.68 to £5.03 for 18 to 20 and £6.31 for 21 and over. We believe that the employer contribution should directly go to the apprentice by bringing the apprentice minimum wage in line with the National Minimum Wage.

4 PAGE 13

Teaching in Further Education

We propose to make it a requirement to have at least five years industry experience to teach vocational qualifications and would reinstate mandatory teacher qualifications and a public register of qualified teachers, trainers and assessors.

5 PAGE 14

Careers Information, Advice and Guidance

We would set aside funds to enable the creation of information, advice and guidance centre hubs. These hubs would be located in every county and would be administered by Local Enterprise Partnerships. IAG Hubs would be required to hold at least five days of drop-in clinics at all secondary schools in an academic year. We commit to ensure that every person between the ages of 13 and 18 have at least one 20 minute session with an advisor per year.

6 PAGE 15

EMA

We would re-introduce the Education Maintenance Allowance for all students on full time programmes.

7 PAGE 16

Transport

We would provide free transport to all young people (aged 16 to 21) on full time programmes. We would also commit to implement a means tested adult student bus pass which would offer discounted fares.

8 PAGE 17

FE Landscape

We would review the existing and newly emerging educational model, assess their cost, impact, understanding and desirability with employers and Higher Education Institutions. We would implement a demand-led gatekeeping process to ensure that public funding is invested in the right avenues and avoid creating short-term 'vanity projects'.

9 PAGE 18

Tackling unemployment with training

We will provide funding for all unemployed people to achieve employment linked training regardless of prior achievement and age and as well commit funding for all adults to achieve level 2 in literacy and maths.

10 PAGE 19

Protected status/term

We would make 'College' a protected term/status FE & Sixth Form Colleges.

11 PAGE 20

Policy impact and creation

We would create an 'office for future generations' in Downing St which risk assesses all government policy on impacts on future generations and reports publicly.

12 PAGE 21

Abolish the UKCES and ETF

We would propose to abolish the UK Commission for Employment and Skills and the Education and Training Foundation and divert the money saved to back to colleges and providers.



13 PAGE 22

A review of 24+ Advanced Learning Loans

We would carry out a full evaluation and impact analysis of existing 24+ Advanced Learning Loans system before committing to any extension or changes to the system.

14 PAGE 23

Traineeships

We would conduct a review into the current restrictions on eligibility and who is allowed to deliver these programmes.

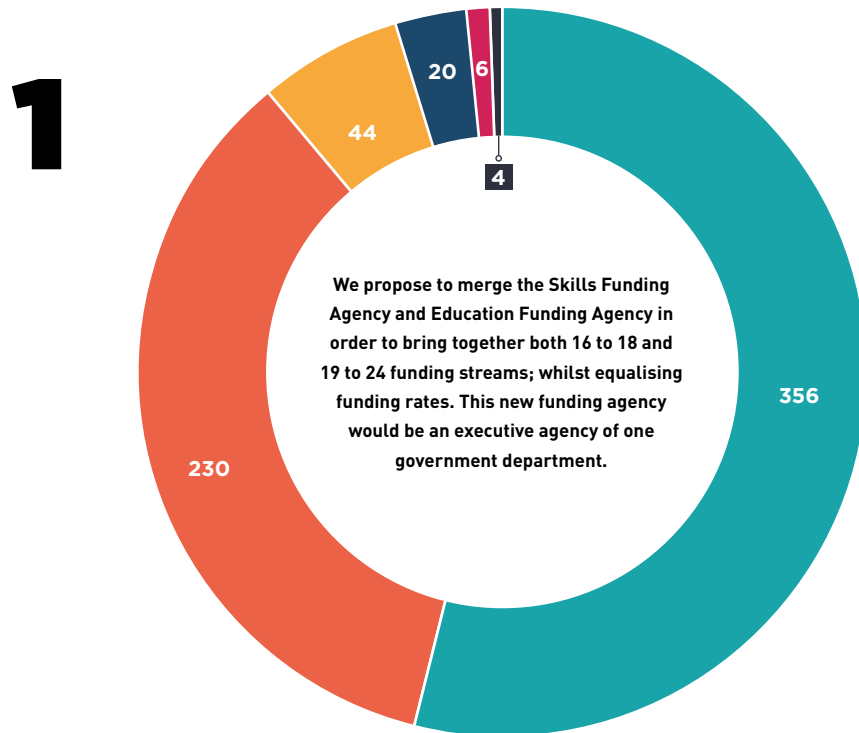
Further Education and Skills policy implementation

"Many employers are being penalised when taking on a 19+ apprentice, there needs to be a fairer system." - **Andrew Roberts, lecturer, Kirklees College**

"I'm not sure it requires the comment about equalising funding rates but one agency and one set of rules is far overdue." - **Carlton Calver, manager, Eastleigh College**

"This would be a key step in implementing a more coherent approach to post-16 education policy. Funding rates for 18-year-olds need to be rethought - the 17.5 per cent differential with 16 and 17-year-olds on the same programmes makes no sense at all." - **Eddie Playfair, principal, Newham sixth form college.**

"In principle the pledge is fine, but there needs to be additional information about the future of community learning for the 19+ group, also from SFA." - **Robyn Kohler, chief executive, Aspire Sussex**



STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE | NO OPINION

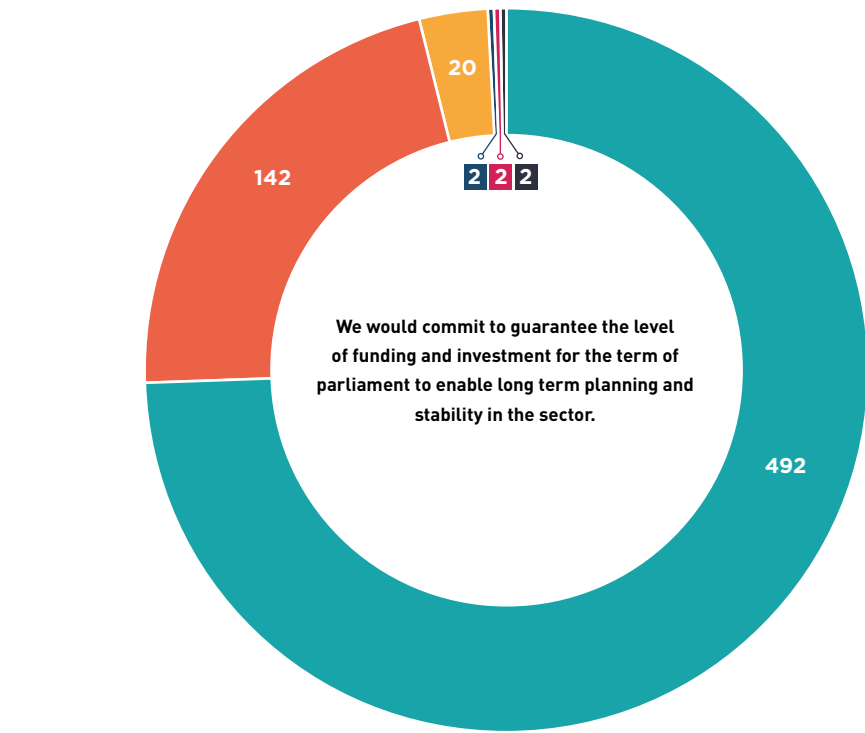
Funding stability

"This would support the process of planning quality provision for all learners, and enable a real impact within the sector." - **Darren Shanley, Middleton Murray**

"Stability in the system is crucial. It has been constantly hit over the last Parliament and this has seriously affected long term planning." - **Anna Connell-Smith, National Union of Students**

"Just one full year of stability would be nice. We are having to reinvent the wheel time and time again just to jump through different hoops." - **Fiona Himsworth, manager, City of York Council**

"[This] would give providers some freedom to get on with the job." - **Alison Boulton, chief executive, National Association of Specialist Colleges**



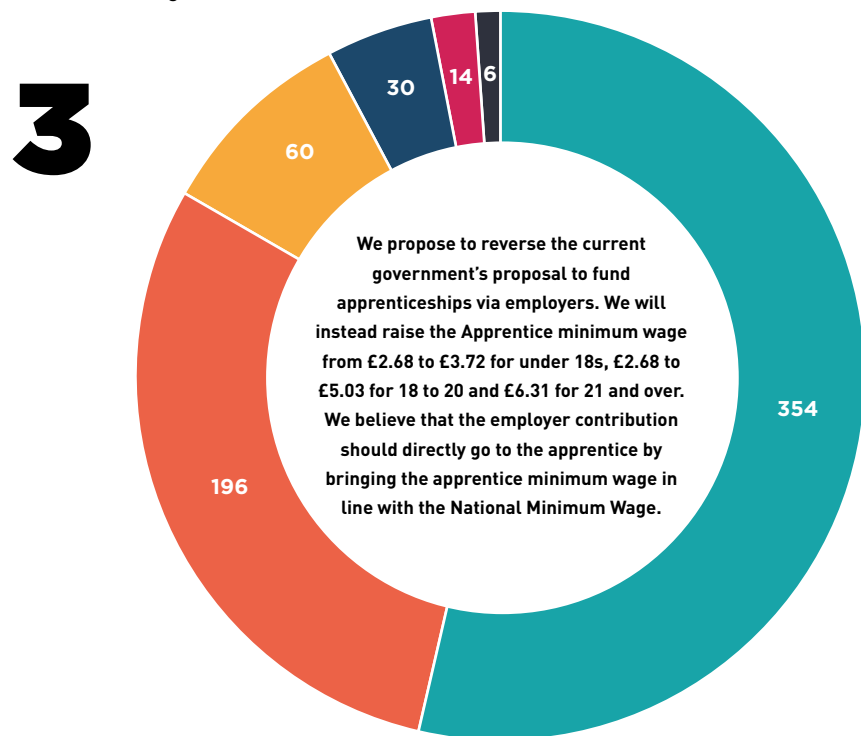
STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE | NO OPINION

Apprenticeship Funding

"Good idea. SMEs simply won't want to train apprentices if there is no assistance with funding." - **Lindsey Johnson, manager, West Suffolk College**

"As a provider with a vested interest in the policy, this pledge goes without saying. Every SME and even larger companies I work with has given the same message, 'We hope this does not happen, we just want you to continue doing what you are doing'." - **John McCollah, manager, The Vocational College**

"I feel that employers will employee less apprenticeships due to having to pay more wages and the employers are happy on how the system is currently run." - **Nicola Williams, Michael John Training School**



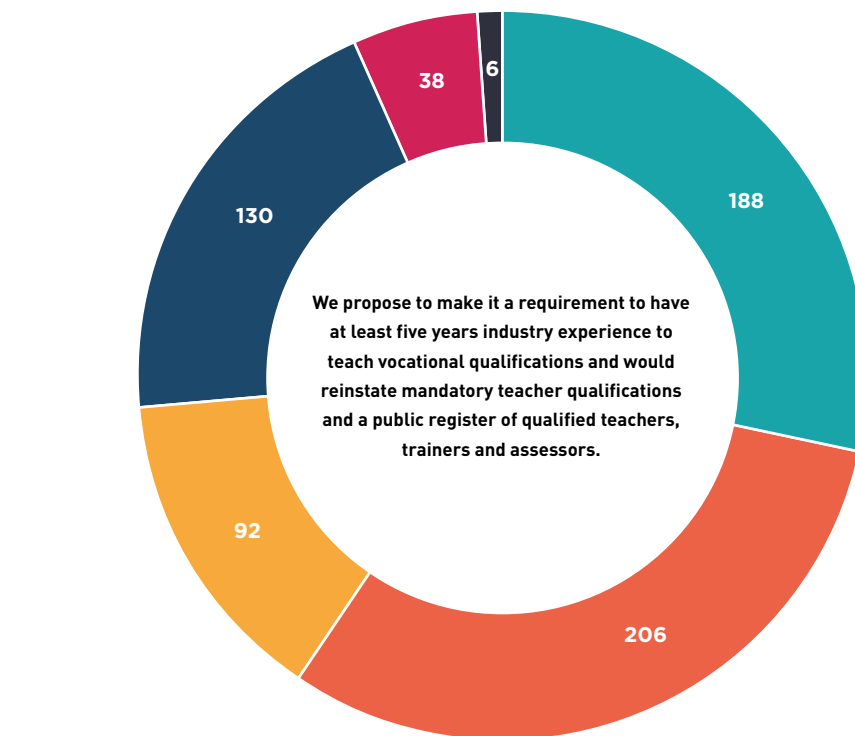
STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE | NO OPINION

Teaching in Further Education

"[I] do not agree as it is not necessary. One's ability to teach is not governed by experience in an industry." - **Mike Ward, chief executive, Rewards Training**

"This is needed but doesn't address the issue of maths and English skills for teachers, which is essential. Addressing maths and English skills does not mean gaining a level two Functional Skills qualification but something more robust and effective." - **Lorraine Dixon, Open Narrative**

"This would be particularly welcome in that it would stop schools offering substandard vocational options. I would further add a requirement for five days occupational updating each year as part of CPD." - **Andrew Stanley, Institution of Civil Engineers**



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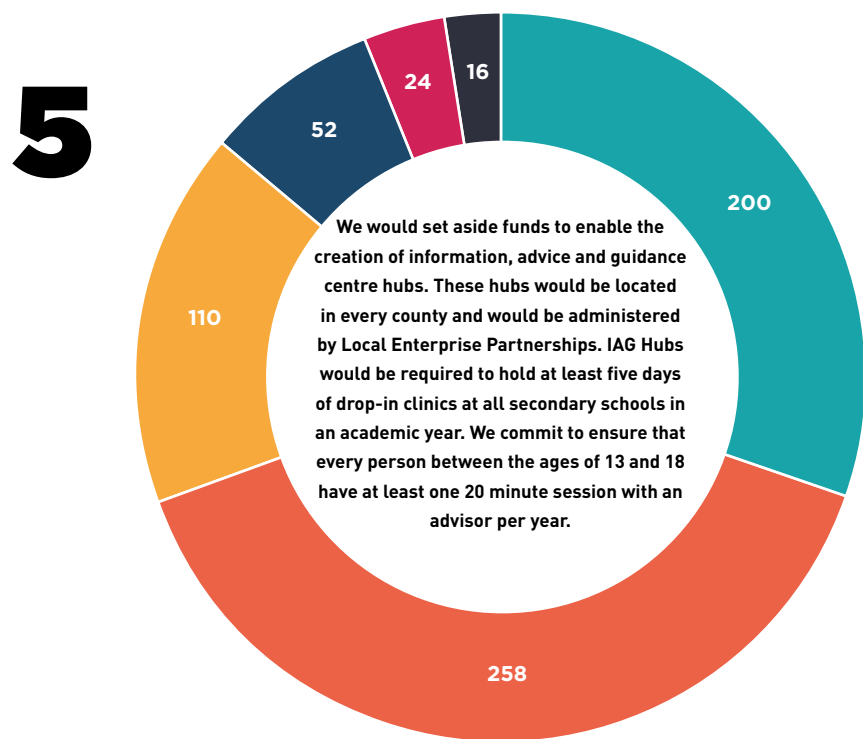
Careers Information, Advice and Guidance

"Urgency needed here as we are losing a generation who are aimless." - **Dr Michael Motley**, chief executive, TQ Training

"Not sure I want anything administered by the LEPs." - **Graham Taylor**, principal, New College Swindon

"I think that it is wrong to put LEPs in charge of guidance; there is a real conflict of interest. If in doubt read the Grapes of Wrath. Guidance needs to be impartial." - **Mick Fletcher**, Policy Consortium

"20 minutes a year with one adviser is insufficient. There needs to be career workshops, open discussions and opportunities to meet employers." - **Fiona Himsworth**, manager, City of York Council



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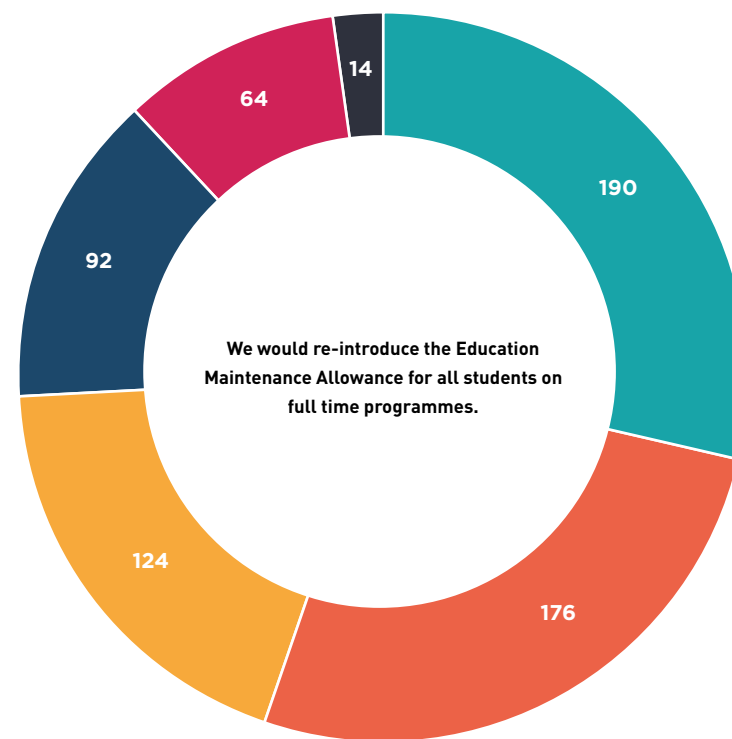
EMA

"A better incentive, surely." - **Matthew Herman**, manager, Newham Adult Learning Service

"I do not agree, it was abused and did not benefit those who delivered the programmes." - **Andrew Roberts**, lecturer, Kirklees College

"Having previously taught to the NEET group, EMA was a key factor in many of them returning to education and was a great loss." - **Lee Reddington**, National Skills Academy Food and Drink

"I don't support this because FT students in colleges have ample time to do part-time work whereas an apprentice, working 30 hours a week, and on a low wage, has very little time to earn extra money." - **Lesley Ellis**, chief executive, Inter Training Services Ltd



STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE | NO OPINION

Transport

"Poor or expensive transport is a barrier to learning." - **Catherine Whitehead, manager, New College Telford**

"This should be available to sub-contracted learners not just college learners." - **Angelica Duncan, chief executive, Chameleon School of Construction Ltd**

"Disagree with the first point - agree with the second." - **Kevin Dowson, chief executive, Kevin Dowson Learning and Development Ltd**

"This would be an ideal situation but may be cost prohibitive. The re-introduction of EMA would offset this requirement in many cases." - **John McCollah, manager, The Vocational College**

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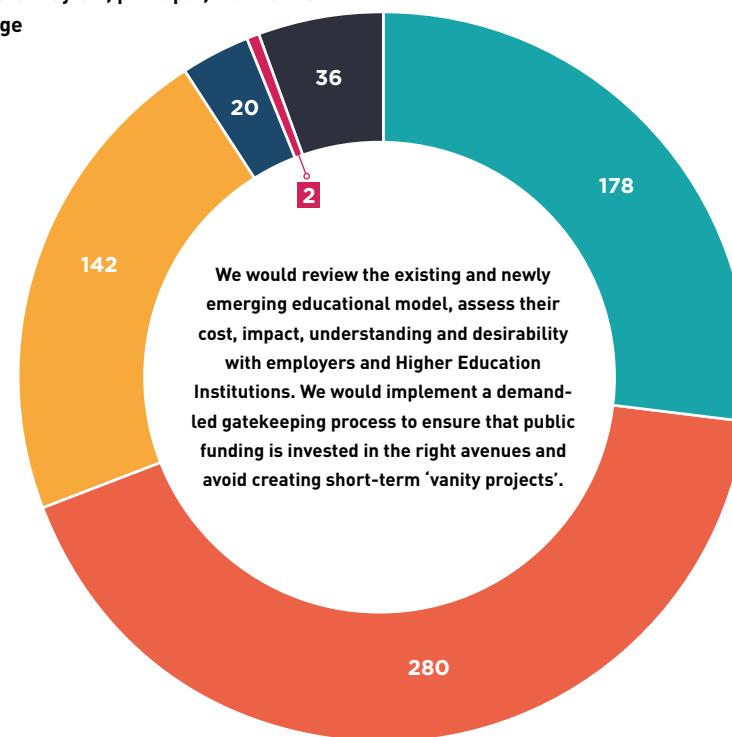
STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE | NO OPINION

FE Landscape

"A 'demand led gatekeeping process' is a bit of a mouthful but the idea is sound. The free market combined with the ability to select by previous achievement at 16 is leading to a proliferation of small and highly selective provision which doesn't necessarily add to the sum total of opportunities available to students - in fact it may restrict it. We need more rational planning of post-16 provision which considers the needs of the whole cohort and ultimately this needs to be accountable to elected local authorities - probably at a regional level." - **Eddie Playfair, principal, Newham Sixth Form College**

"There's supposed to be value for money criteria - but government and OFSTED don't use them. Witness the many sixth forms with less than 100 learners. Taxpayers' money is wasted on underused resources." - **Graham Taylor, principal, New College Swindon**

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STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE | NO OPINION

Tackling unemployment with training

"Integrating priorities and functions of DWP and BIS at national level, and JCP/FE sector at local, is needed to stop current policy opposition, which wastes money and causes huge frustration to unemployed adults and young people." -

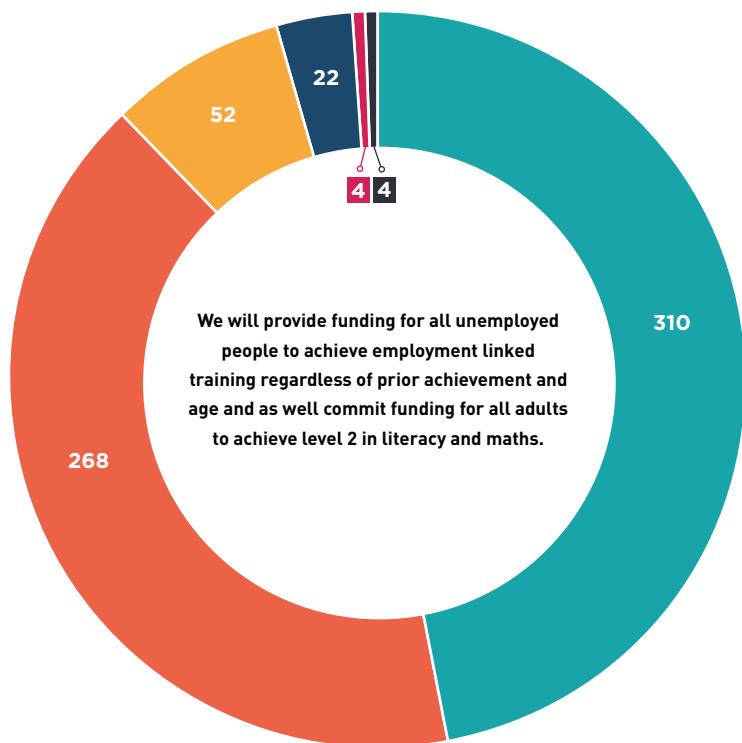
Tricia Hartley, chief executive, Campaign for Learning

"Tackling the excessive amount or pointless degrees would be more suitable than re-training them when they can't get a graduate job." -

Carlton Calver, manager, Eastleigh College

"Re-training is often the only option into re-employment." - **Patricia Griffin, manager, Premier Training International**

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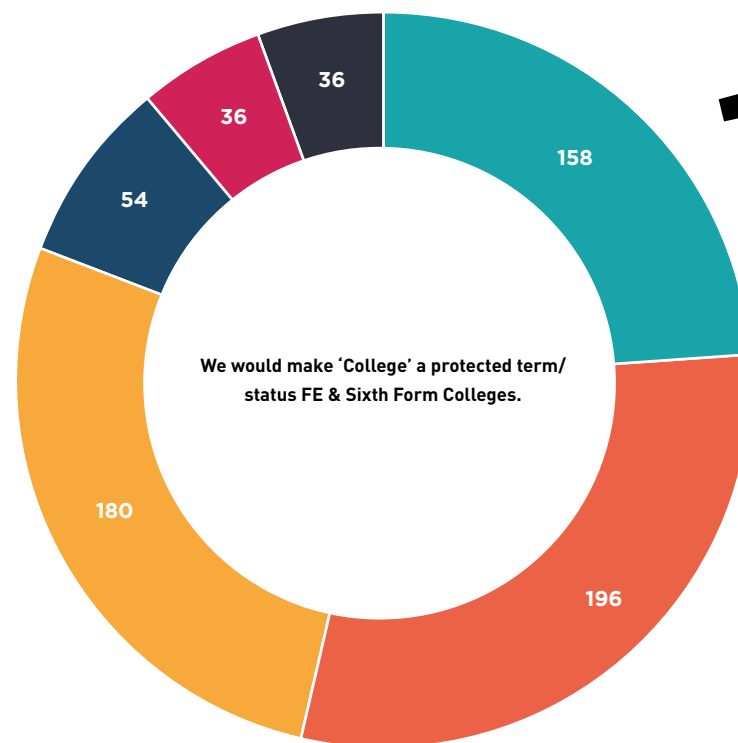
Protected status/term

"This would need to include specialist colleges that are also part of the post-16 sector." - **Alison Boulton, chief executive, National Association of Specialist Colleges**

"Useful, particularly with some questionable private providers around. While checking qualifications we found a 'college' and 'university' operating from a mini-cab company above a restaurant." - **Andrew Stanley, Institution of Civil Engineers**

"I have some sympathy, but think this is shutting stable door after horse has bolted - every other secondary school in country now calls itself a college so energy better spent on other issues I think." - **Tricia Hartley, chief executive, Campaign for Learning**

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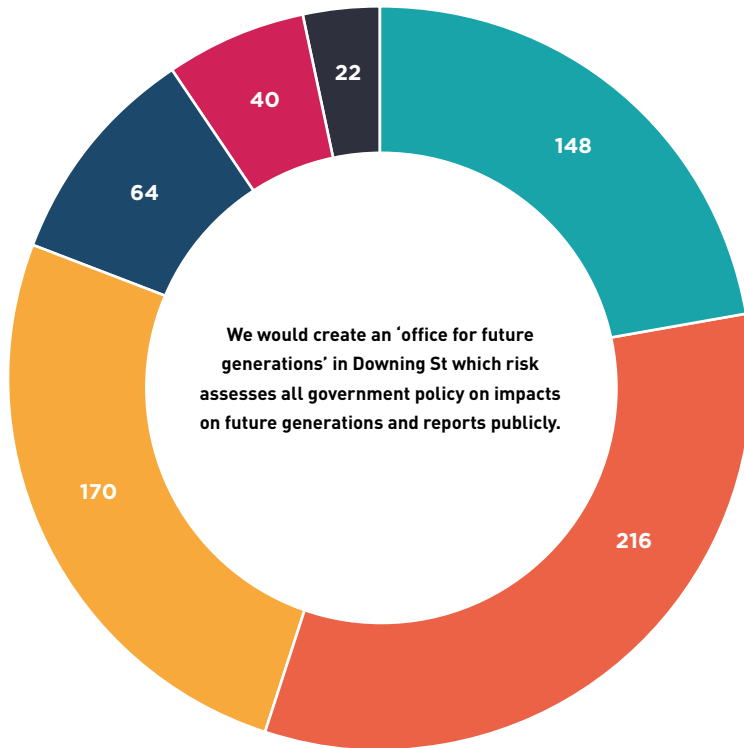
Policy impact and creation

"Yes, so long as it was impartial and protected from political spin and bias." - **Matthew Herman, manager, Newham Adult Learning Service**

"Another waffle shop which wouldn't change anything." - **Graham Taylor, principal, New College Swindon**

"Unclear as to purpose." - **Lindsey Johnson, manager, West Suffolk College**

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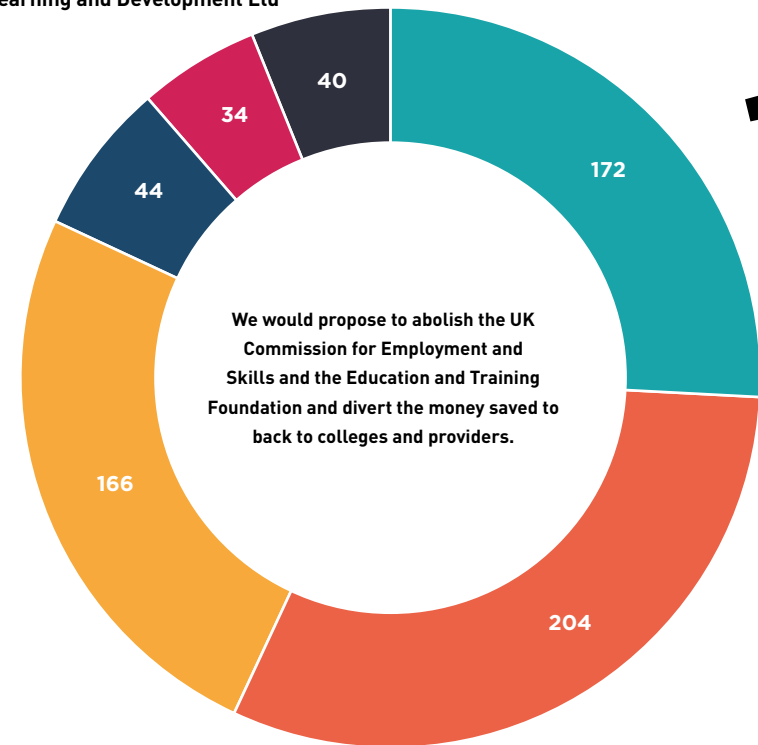
Abolish the UKCES and ETF

"I think some UKCES functions (eg provision of labour market data) should be preserved, but maybe within BIS. ETF's expansion into yet another quango with regional teams etc. is absolutely contrary to what we were assured during the consultation phase." - **Tricia Hartley, chief executive, Campaign for Learning**

"The sector and the professionals in it need a professional body to advocate for them and set standards as well as overseeing development. Why anyone would propose further devaluing our profession by abolishing any of this makes no sense whatsoever. How will question nine have any meaning without a professional body in place?" - **Lynne Taylerson, lecturer, Real Time Education Ltd**

"We need some vehicle to promote and share good practice and set standards and guidelines for the sector." - **Kevin Dowson, chief executive, Kevin Dowson Learning and Development Ltd**

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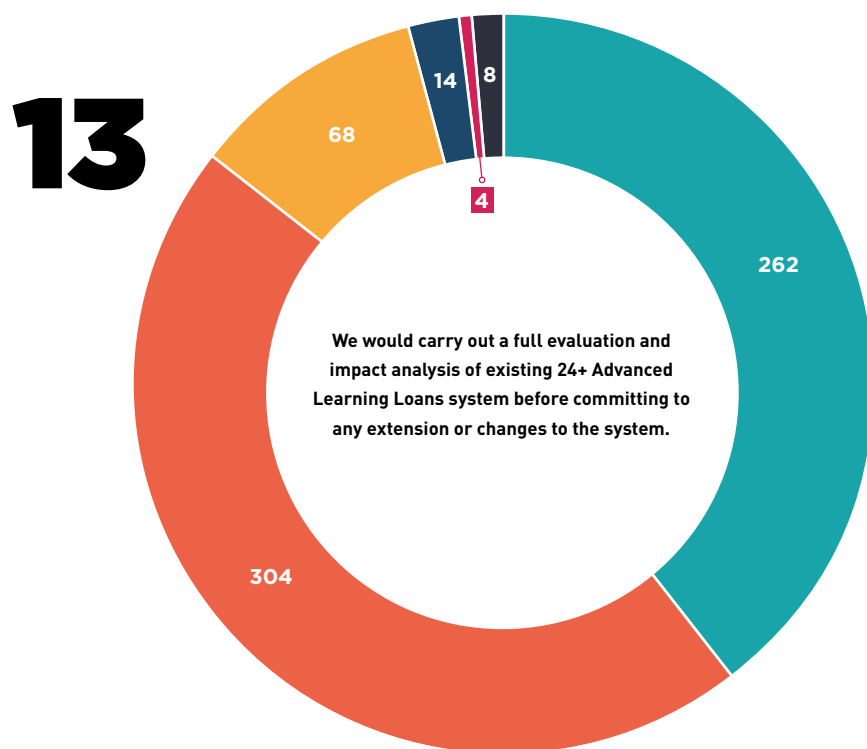
STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE | NO OPINION

A review of 24+ Advanced Learning Loans

"Abolish the 24+ advanced loans completely."
- **Andrew Roberts**, lecturer, **Kirklees College**

"A must." - **Dr Michael Motley**, chief executive,
TQ Training

"Needs to happen - could extend to lower levels."
- **Lindsey Johnson**, manager, **West Suffolk College**



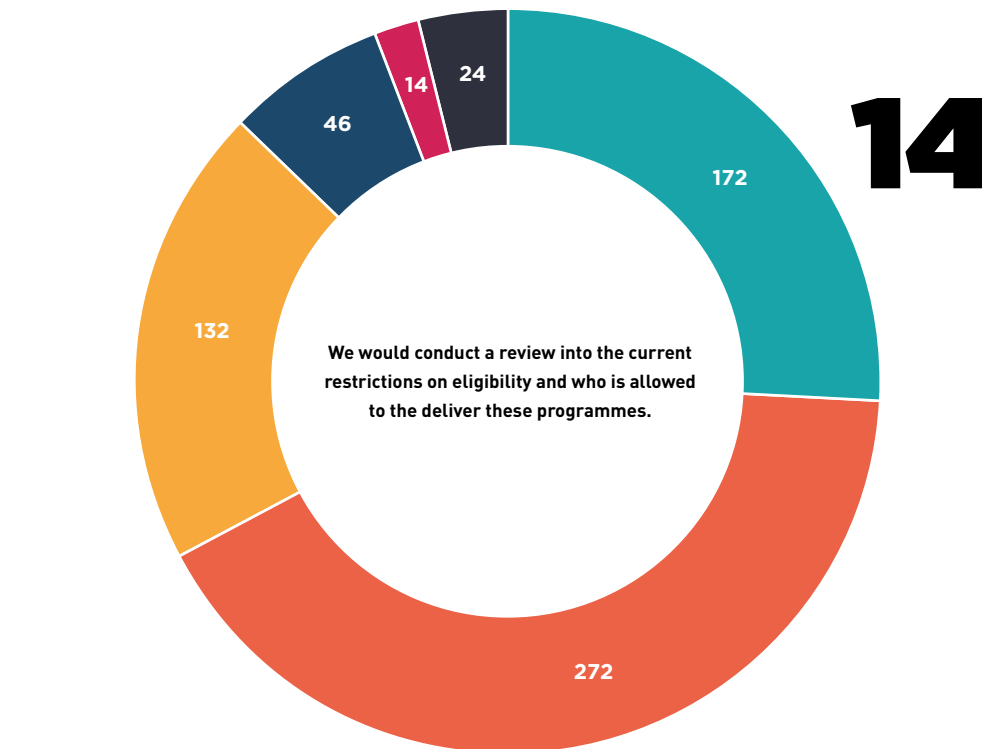
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Traineeships

"I partially agree with this. Keeping the high grade requirements but not the duration with which they have previously subcontracted with a lead provider." - **Carlton Calver**, manager,
Eastleigh College

"Great idea. This will help stop company setting up short course that lead to no progression or to a course that give no formal qualification." -
Nicola Williams, **Michael John Training School**

"Also review SFA Traineeship funding to be on same lines as EFA Traineeship funding." -
Jim Clarke, chief executive, **Key Training**



STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE | NO OPINION

WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY



MARTIN DOEL

Chief executive of
the Association of
Colleges (AoC)

It is not surprising that the call for financial stability in the FE sector has been supported most widely in this survey. We can all appreciate that the government needed to make savings, but the FE sector seems to have had more than its fair share of funding cuts. The Association of Colleges (AoC) is already working closely with the three main political parties to make sure they understand the importance of maintaining the level of college funding, even if

they aren't able to give more.

Good careers education is vital to support young people at the age of 14 and 16 in making decisions which could affect their whole future. AoC, through its Careers Guidance: Guaranteed, has been campaigning for career hubs in each local area for the past year, and it is something we have already raised with Nicky Morgan since her appointment as Secretary of State for Education.

"Colleges already work closely with Jobcentre Plus to provide education and training for the unemployed but this is one area where constant funding would be useful to allow them to plan ahead. Supporting adults who are unemployed to retrain is as important for that person as it is for the UK economy."



DAVID HUGHES

Chief executive of the National
Institute of Adult Continuing
Education (Niace)

It is not surprising, in a time of great austerity, that the main focus for many people working in FE is on funding. But the longer-term game, and the real benefit of funding stability, is that it can provide the room for colleges and learning providers to invest in new, creative ways of engaging people in learning.

We need to stimulate demand from people

already in work to progress their skills, from people with very low level skills and low confidence and from employers. I hope that funding stability would give the space to help achieve that, because the long-term game for funding is about more employers paying and more people willing to invest in their own skills.

I am disappointed that incentivising employers is not more prominent in this manifesto. This is why we have called for a Royal Commission to look at how to incentivise bigger contributions from government, employers and individuals.

We need a whole-system overview of the long-term skills needs and funding issues facing the UK over the next 20 years and we need to set a vision for lifelong learning, including for schools, FE, HE, the workplace and beyond.



DR LYNNE SEDGMORE

Executive director
of the 157 Group

As the voices of those working in FE, these proposed pledges deserve serious consideration. Two key themes – stability and equity – are present in many of the suggestions.

The ability to plan for the long-term is vital, and a funding settlement for the whole of the next parliament would be a most welcome achievement. It is also right to call for different pathways through our education system – regardless of age and type of institution – to be treated equally, both in terms of funding

and quality assurance.

The most popular pledges are all about ensuring an excellent student experience – by providing adequate financial support, by providing high quality advice and guidance, by guaranteeing teacher professionalism and by assuring the value for money of new providers. These principles cannot be argued with.

Many of the concrete proposals involve creating new structures, merging or abolishing existing ones and – in some cases – imposing greater regulation. Such solutions are tempting indeed, but history shows that political meddling with structures is not always the best way of ensuring success.

Rather than mandating changes which will then need monitoring, we may be better to articulate the principles and then trust teachers and leaders to work out how best to deliver them.



STEWART SEGAL

Chief executive of the
Association of Employment
and Learning Providers
(AELP)

It was interesting to note that the highest-rated issue was the need to establish some policy and funding stability in the sector. This is something the AELP has continually campaigned for.

We are therefore not sure that changing funding departments will deliver the coherence we need. In the past we have seen duplicated policy development even within the same department.

We believe that the apprenticeship funding

reforms will only work if employers are given a choice over whether they are directly funded or the funding is instead passed to their chosen provider.

For tackling youth unemployment, we have to build the credibility of traineeships which has to become the programme of choice for young people and avoiding new initiatives. Programmes for young people not in work should focus on high quality work related learning and work experience. This has to start with comprehensive careers information.

On teaching experience we believe that training providers must retain the responsibility for ensuring that the people who teach and train have the right qualifications and training. This should not be imposed by government. The ETF has an important role to play in this working closely with the representative groups in the sector.

PLEDGES IN ORDER OF AGREEMENT

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO OPINION
Funding stability	492	142	20	2	2	2
Further Education and Skills policy implementation	356	230	44	20	6	4
Apprenticeship Funding	354	196	60	30	14	6
Tackling unemployment with training	310	268	52	22	4	4
Transport	264	226	90	46	18	16
A review of 24+ Advanced Learning Loans	262	304	68	14	4	8
Information, Advice and Guidance	200	258	110	52	24	16
EMA	190	176	124	92	64	14
Teaching in Further Education	188	206	92	130	38	6
FE Landscape	178	280	142	20	4	36
Abolish the UKCES and ETF	172	204	166	44	34	40
Traineeships	172	272	132	46	14	24
Protected status/term	158	196	180	54	36	36
Policy impact and creation	148	216	170	64	40	22

The FE Week Readers' Manifesto

1. Funding stability

We would commit to guarantee the level of funding and investment for the term of parliament to enable long term planning and stability in the sector.

2. Further Education and Skills policy implementation

We propose to merge the Skills Funding Agency and Education Funding Agency in order to bring together both 16 to 18 and 19 to 24 funding streams, while equalising funding rates. This new funding agency would be an executive agency of one government department.

3. Apprenticeship Funding

We propose to reverse the current government's proposal to fund apprenticeships via employers. We will instead raise the Apprentice minimum wage from £2.73 to £3.72 for under 18s, £2.73 to £5.03 for 18 to 20 and £6.31 for 21 and over. We believe that the employer contribution should directly go to the apprentice by bringing the apprentice minimum wage in line with the National Minimum Wage.

4. Tackling unemployment with training

We will provide funding for all unemployed people to achieve employment linked training regardless of prior achievement and age and as well commit funding for all adults to achieve level 2 in literacy and maths.

5. Transport

We would provide free transport to all young people (aged 16 to 21) on full time programmes. We would also commit to implement a means tested adult student bus pass which would offer discounted fares.