



## From Rachael Campey, Chief Executive

**First the good news: more schools are now contacting the National Apprenticeship Service to ask them to come and talk to pupils about apprenticeships... The bad news is that the NAS no longer has the resource to provide a formal service to schools**

Frustratingly this has been cut due to recent *restructuring*. This leaves a gap – to add to all the other gaps in careers advice and guidance for young people – which urgently needs filling.

The Government is staking a lot on apprenticeships to help boost skills and employment. However, according to a new report by the Institute for Public Policy Research, 40% of apprenticeships went to over-25s last year and just 37,000 of the extra 126,000 apprenticeships created in 2010 went to 16-24 year-olds. It says employers have become “increasingly reluctant to hire school leavers” and they need more support to set up apprenticeship programmes.

As you will see from the report below on our recent apprenticeship seminar with David Smale, the growth in apprenticeships is healthy. The Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) has urged the Government to remain on track with its current apprenticeships policy, which, it says, was never set up exclusively for the benefit of young people as a form of job creation.

That may be, but there is a strong case for an improved information service to schools about apprenticeships. At a time of rising youth unemployment, it is shocking that young people may be missing out on apprenticeship opportunities because schools lack sufficient knowledge to promote them.

Rachael's regular blogs can be found at: [www.feds.co.uk](http://www.feds.co.uk)

## Apprenticeships: time for employers to show more leadership?

### **A seminar with David Smale, National Apprenticeship Service (NAS)**

**3 November 2011**

As head of employer accounts in London and the South East, David Smale knows at first hand the concerns businesses have about apprenticeships, but also the benefits they bring.

Apprenticeship numbers are rising rapidly and the government is promising further cuts to ‘red tape’ and, possibly, further employer incentives. This seminar gave us an opportunity to step back and reflect on the role apprenticeships can and should play in creating the workforce of the future.

While growth is healthy, much of it is among adult apprenticeships. Some feel unconvinced by this increase and question whether they should even be using the brand. At the same time, others question whether an occupationally-specific apprenticeship offers an appropriately broad education for 16-19 year-olds.

Whether the purists win the debate or whether more flowers will be allowed to bloom remains to be seen.

*A FEdS paper on the seminar will be circulated to members shortly, and will be available in the members' area of the website.*

## Forthcoming FEdS events

**Tuesday, 5 December  
18.00-20.00**

**ifs School of Finance, London**

### ***Building a vocational skills legacy for the UK***

***A seminar with David Cragg, deputy chair of WorldSkills 2011 and National Director of Development, Skills Funding Agency***

David will discuss plans to build on the success of WorldSkills 2011 and explain how it could help to drive up the standards and status of vocational skills in the UK.

The seminar will be followed by a Christmas drinks reception.

*FEdS members have already received an invitation to this event.*

*If you are not a member of FEdS but would be interested in attending, please contact: [coral.rayfield@prospects.co.uk](mailto:coral.rayfield@prospects.co.uk)*

***Sponsored by ifs School of Finance***

**Wednesday 30 November  
18.00-20.30**

**Royal Scots Club, Edinburgh**

***FEdS is one of 17 professional organisations, including FEdS member the Chartered Insurance Institute, organising Networking with Confidence.***

The speaker will be Fraser Murray of Rock the Boat Consulting.

*The fee is £17.50 inc VAT. Booking information is available on our website, or contact [angela.gardner@lineone.net](mailto:angela.gardner@lineone.net) for more information.*

**Connect. Collaborate. Make a difference.**

## A fairer HE admissions system?

The consultation published by UCAS on post-qualifications admissions (PQA) has met with a similarly lukewarm response as Stephen Schwartz's [previous attempts in this area](#) in 2004.

The proposals would have young people taking A levels in April, with results available by early July. Applications would take place after the exam results were known, with offers made by mid-September. The autumn term would start later in October.

Wendy Piatt of the Russell Group of large research-intensive universities said the proposals might restrict institutions' ability to make a "fair and thorough assessment of applicants" because of the 9-week turn-around period. The University & College Union worried about the impact on teachers and academics.

Although head teachers generally support the proposals, at least one union complained that schools would suffer upheaval, rather than universities.

According to the BBC, the government has said off the record that it has 'no appetite' for significant reform. This is in contrast to rather more positive comments from the Universities Minister, David Willetts.

Few have commented from the point of view of learners themselves, although interesting suggestions such as starting the HE academic year in January and encouraging all young people to take at least a year before they decide on higher education might work in their favour.

*This appears to be a good case of the institutional tail wagging the learning dog. If HE were seen as a range of options that could be picked up at varying times during a lifetime – rather than an experience that has to be crammed in 18-21 – the discussion would be immaterial. The consultation closes on 20 January.*

## Careers

In November, **Prospects** is hosting the biggest series of skills, careers and training events aimed at S4–6 students across Scotland.

'Skills Scotland' is run in partnership with organisations including FEoS member **Education Scotland**. See [www.skillsscotland.co.uk](http://www.skillsscotland.co.uk) for more information or to find out how to get involved. There are events on 16-17 November in Glasgow and 22 November in Aberdeen.

Prospects is also organising three **National Career Guidance Shows** in London, Leeds and Edinburgh in February and March 2012, in conjunction with the Institute of Career Guidance. [www.nationalcareerguidanceshow.com](http://www.nationalcareerguidanceshow.com).

## News...news...news...news...news...news...news...news...

- Skills Minister John Hayes has announced a **review of the Skills Funding Agency** and the statutory post of Chief Executive of Skills Funding, currently filled by Geoff Russell. The review will be run in line with the Cabinet Office's Public Bodies Review Programme, which would suggest that the first stage will be completed within three months.
- Education Secretary Michael Gove has announced £500m of capital funding to help alleviate the shortage of **primary school places**. £260m has been allocated to London councils.
- The Business, Innovation & Skills select committee has published [its report](#) on the government's **reform of higher education**, criticising the rigid implementation timetable that has resulted in some reforms being rushed and misunderstood.
- Theresa May, who is Equalities Minister as well as Home Secretary, has announced a scheme to recruit and train 5,000 business mentors to guide and inspire **female entrepreneurs**.

*These stories and more will feature in the next FEoS UK Briefing and Scotland Briefing, due early December.*

## Members' News

The **Financial Skills Partnership** has launched a new careers website covering careers in finance, accountancy and financial services.

Directions provides access to information, work placements and careers opportunities.

[www.directions.org.uk](http://www.directions.org.uk)

The **ifs School of Finance** has launched a search for the best student investors in the country.

The annual Student Investor Challenge gives teams of up to four 14-19 year-olds a virtual £100,000 to invest in the stock market over a period of 3 months.

The competition runs from 31 October to 10 February, and is now in its 19<sup>th</sup> year. More information at: [www.studentinvestor.org](http://www.studentinvestor.org).

The **ifs School of Finance** is also expanding its full-time undergraduate provision.

It will be offering its current BSc in Banking Practice & Management at Birmingham Metropolitan and Leeds City Colleges as well as at its own campus in the City of London, where it will also be launching a new BSc in Finance & Accounting for Financial Services.

**HTI** has launched a new peer mentoring programme for young people in danger of becoming 'NEET' (not in education, employment or training).

The programme trains young apprentices to mentor those who need support.

For more information contact Tara Lambert: [t.lambert@hti.org.uk](mailto:t.lambert@hti.org.uk)

**HTI** is also organising a **Strategic Forum discussion in London** entitled: **Choices: employers' routes to market; students' routes to employment**.

24 November, 16.30-19.45

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