

Colleges set the pace



11.11.08 | Education Guardian | The 157 Group: promoting the furthe education sector

In association with the 157 Group

“ We have a responsibility to help the sector and the government develop the best possible service for the nation ”
Graham Moore, Stoke on Trent college, *page 3*



Working together: the 157 Group, which includes Manchester College of Arts and Technology (above), aims to develop the reputation and influence of the sector Howard Barlow

A voice for further education

What is the 157 Group? **Peter Kingston** explains how 25 larger colleges have formed an alliance with the aim of building relationships both inside and outside the sector

A new addition is settling in among those organisations which feature numbers in their titles. Along with, for instance, the 1922 Committee and the 100 Club, we now have the 157 Group.

These associations are all very different. One is political; another is a live music venue. The 157 Group, the latest addition to this group of numbers, is a smallish alliance of the largest further education colleges in England.

There are 25 colleges in the group and the criteria for joining are few and straightforward. First, a college must first have scored at least a grade 2 for leadership in management in its most recent Ofsted inspection. Second, the college must have a turnover of not less than £35m per annum.

A wider role

There is some flexibility – sometimes the second condition is relaxed, but not the first. “Some smaller colleges may be included if they are thought to exert regional influence,” says the rulebook.

But why the cryptic title of 157? That refers to paragraph 157 of the report which Sir Andrew Foster, a former chief executive of the Audit Commission, published in November 2005 on the future role of further education colleges.

The founders of the group, which was established in March 2006, were responding to the paragraph’s call for “a greater involvement of principals in national representation, in particular those from

larger, successful colleges where management capacity and capability exists to release them for this work”.

The key paragraph continues: “There is a strong need for articulate FE college principals to be explaining the services they give to society and how colleges can make a significant contribution to the economy and to developing fulfilled citizens.”

Two years, on the rationale for the group remains much the same, says its recently appointed chief executive, Lynne Sedgmore: “It exists because its members want to add a perspective or view or distinctive voice from the position of large, high-quality colleges.”

She says that there are four aims for the group: “Number one is shaping and influencing policy and being part of the solution rather than reacting to it.”

How is that done? “By building a trusted but challenging relationship at very senior levels of government. By being invited in at a formative stage when they are still trying to work out where they are going. The idea is to get in earlier and earlier so that you are actually co-creating policy.”

Like any organisation wanting to be heard by legislators, the 157 Group aims to come up with intelligent, constructive and practical ideas. It wants access at ministerial level and more detailed discussions with the civil servants closer to the coal face.

As for what in particular it wants to influence, there are such obvious concerns as the organisation of further education that will result from the “machinery of government” changes that the government announced last year. “We are very

interested in how the landscape will look after the dissolution of the Learning and Skills Council,” says Sedgmore. “We are hoping for a much more devolved situation where colleges become major strategic players in their localities.”

And of course the group is keeping tabs on opposition party policies much more than might have been the case had the group existed 10 or even five years ago.

There is nothing out of the ordinary in this and indeed the group is anxious that it does not appear in any way detached from the rest of the further education sector. Its members remain members of the Association of Colleges, Sedgmore says. And though by definition the group is exclusive, its members are anxious that this does not carry the unattractive and divisive qualities that can go with this and which those on the outside of any group are only too willing to ascribe to it.

Like other societies within the FE sector – for example, the sixth form colleges, the tertiaries and the land-based establishments – the 157 Group simply unites a sub-group of institutions that share a common identity, Sedgmore says.

In addition to helping one another, its members are dedicated to what she calls her second aim: “To make a contribution

‘One of the aims of the group is to play a key role in enhancing the national reputation of further education’

to the quality and capacity building of the whole sector through sharing good practice”. Third, the group strives to follow Foster’s advice “to play a key role in enhancing the national reputation of further education”. The final aim is for the group to “push itself as a peer network” and to learn to be “even better world-class leaders”.

Improvement

So, Sedgmore concludes, the group is all about improving the further education sector and about doing the same for itself. That is seen to perfection, she says, in the group’s push for the self-regulation that government has promised. “Self-regulation is on the way and that’s a reason why we exist,” she says.

A queue of colleges is wanting to join the 157 Group, Sedgmore says. It is keen to take in up to five of them in. But as well as satisfying the two existing criteria, the newcomers will have to show that they enhance the group’s geographical reach. At present there are regions, such as East Anglia, where the 157 Group has no presence.

So it’s early days for the latest addition to the roster of organisations that take their name from a number.

Weblinks

157 Group: 157group.co.uk
Association of Colleges: aoc.co.uk
Ofsted: ofsted.gov.uk
Department for Children, Schools and Families: dcsf.gov.uk
Training Quality Standard: trainingqualitystandard.co.uk

Introduction

Uncharted waters

We are in new territory. This is National Colleges Week – and there has never been one before.

According to the blurb put out by government, the 157 Group of colleges and other further education alliances, these seven days are for “celebrating the role colleges play in unlocking talent in communities”.

The further education sector packs a big punch by anyone’s standards. Almost 3 million adults attend colleges each year and three-quarters of a million young people aged between 16 and 19 study for qualifications in a sixth form, tertiary or further education college, while 48% of all those going on to higher education do so from the FE sector.

While further education asks the nation to celebrate its colleges this week, this supplement shines a spotlight or two on its newest organisation: the 157 Group of colleges, whose members pride themselves in showing a lead for the sector while displaying some of its best qualities.

In these pages we ask whether size really matters for colleges and discuss the notion that there should be no upper limit on an institution’s size.

Leaders of some of the biggest colleges argue the proposition that they should be pulling their weight more to enhance the reputation of further education as a whole.

What do the 25 members of the 157 Group mean by self-regulation, we ask, and how much of it do they hope to achieve? Why is it so important and why would it make any difference to students and employers?

Almost three years to the day after his report on the future role of colleges was published, Sir Andrew Foster takes another look at further education and says what he thinks of the new group which has taken its inspiration from this work.

Peter Kingston

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Commissioning editor Peter Kingston
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Colleges set the pace

Size

How to have a presence ‘that really matters’

Larger institutions are about ‘a capacity to do a wide range of things’, and bring benefits to everyone, say members of the 157 Group

Andrew Mourant

A club for self-styled big shots? Too small if your turnover’s less than £35m? So it seemed to lesser mortals soon after the 157 Group’s inception when relations between the largest FE institutions and Association of Colleges (AoC) reached their lowest ebb.

Both sides say they’re now working together amicably. Size does matter, say the 157 Group principals, but it’s not everything. How you run your college; its location; Ofsted inspection grades: these count too. “I think there’s a place for smaller institutions but the advantage of larger colleges is they can represent broader sections of their community,” says Lynne Sedgemore, the group’s new executive director.

The group has 25 members at present; more are clamouring to join what they perceive as an elite that crucially has the ear of ministers – Sedgemore says numbers will increase to 30. “But we don’t want people without good leadership or management skills,” says Graham Moore, principal of Stoke on Trent college and chair of the 157 Group.

Sedgemore, formerly chief executive of the Centre for Excellence in Leadership, says that rather than appear strident, the group aims to be “at the table early” and doing things behind the scenes, such as lobbying and being a “critical friend to the government”.

Size may matter but it’s not everything – one member college, Bedford, has an annual turnover of just £25m. However, it’s in a region without any so-called “super colleges” and where the group was keen to have a presence.

Bedford principal Ian Pryce says small general providers are destined to struggle, but “with a large college if construction dips but business does well, you can ride it out”. However, he says there remains “a clear role for niche providers”.

Pryce sees the importance of size when, for example, trying to land contracts with the likes of Job Centre Plus. Effort has been poured into beefing up Bedford’s profile – it leads on the Train to Gain consortium, for example. “We’ve invested a lot in our sales team,” he says. Pryce would be happy if Bedford were a bit bigger. But it’s never merged with any other institution and nothing is on the cards.

When John Denham, Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills, remarked at last year’s AoC conference that “there is no evidence that larger colleges provide more effective education”, various FE leaders rushed to interpret what he meant. Sedgemore says she believes that Denham was “asking for robust evidence that merger is the best way forward”; while Moore says that he “was saying you have to ask the right questions. It isn’t a question of being opportunistic.”

Dame Ruth Silver, principal of Lewisham College in south-east London, was initially wary of the group and its motives. But, she says, her mind was changed because “there was no voice for large colleges”. Lewisham has 13,000 full-time and part-time students and an annual turnover of almost £40m. “It doesn’t matter if you’re big or small – in some cases small is



Too big for their boots? The 157 Group has striven to dispel that image and says it’s working closely with the rest of the sector

Cornwall college Everyone benefits from wide links with business and the community

The staff member:

John Latham, principal
I’ve been in the job three years. My background was in the private sector – I worked as an underwriter in the City, then at universities, eventually becoming chief operating officer at Liverpool University.

I think being big means you have more chance of surviving the slings and arrows. If you’re working off a reasonable turnover – ours is £70m – it means you can develop a depth of management capacity.

My time here has been characterised by cementing our reputation with employers – our size has enabled us to do that, and helped do it quicker and better. We’ve also been able to spend money researching the impact of the training and education we provide.

Most businesses down here are SMEs [small and medium-sized enterprises]. We’ve developed different models of education and training. One is remote delivery – bringing it into the workplace without the requirement for blocks of time off or presence on the campus.

I’ve found the 157 Group valuable in helping navigate a complicated world – you have access to really good colleges and leaders who can try and interpret all this stuff.

The Employer:

Jill Carr, training manager at yacht-builder and refitter Pendennis

We’ve enjoyed a successful 10-year partnership with Cornwall College and now run two separate schemes together at the Falmouth Marine School – a general four-year scheme and a specialist three-year surface finishing scheme.

When the need arose, the college worked hard with Pendennis, the British Marine Federation and the South West Regional Development Agency, to establish the facilities and course – this was the first of its kind in the country.

Paint spray booths were imported from Holland to provide identical real conditions to our facilities in the shipyard. It followed our other successful apprenticeship course – again custom-designed for Pendennis – to produce highly skilled young people able to contribute to our growing business.

It’s been a great achievement which we hope to mirror in the paint and surface finishing course.

Over the 10 years both organisations have flourished and expanded in scope and size. The contribution the apprenticeship scheme has made cannot be underestimated – it has produced highly talented personnel, not to mention budding managers of the future.

Over 100 local young people have

The student:

John Clayton, 33, BSc Hons Combined Social Science

I chose Cornwall college because it was convenient – I was well established in the area and had a good job working with people who have mental health problems. But I needed to keep the job going while studying.

If the college wasn’t the size it is and didn’t offer so much, I probably would have moved out of the county – I wanted nothing less than an honours degree. A lot of good quality people are returning to education after 10 or 15 years. I think it helps prevent a brain drain.

This year I’m on a sabbatical and full-time president of the students union.

The college takes student engagement very seriously; it’s invested heavily in the union. I’ve seen students enjoy opportunities they wouldn’t have had in smaller institutions. I’ve been able to see links the college has with employers and other institutions. Just being a student here opens doors.

Having seven sites means people have a good choice of sports and social facilities and increasingly, I’ve noticed people moving around to take advantage of them. Students can use the library of the campus nearest to home even if they’re studying a course on another site.



John Clayton: ‘Being here opens doors’

benefited across the two schemes and our current intake makes up just under 20% of the workforce. The commitment, support and breadth of knowledge provided by a large educational institution like this is invaluable.

smaller institutions. You need a critical mass in an urban area. Size makes a college more resilient – you aren’t dependent on the skills of one or two people.”

He has forged strategic partnerships with bodies such as the local authority and Staffordshire University. “We have one of the country’s highest rates of economic inactivity but, because of our reach

we picked up a contract for the whole of Staffordshire with JobCentre Plus getting hard-to-reach people back into work.”

In a complex institution it’s impossible for any principal to know everything that’s going on. The way round this, say college leaders, is good-quality staff. “A principal has to look at the strategic view,” says Moore.

demonstrated over so many years its capacity to work with multiple funding regimes at the same time as being buffeted by so many changes in policy and direction.

This has given colleges the confidence to create their own destiny and foster innovation, equipping them well to manage change. Colleges are seeking the benefits of scale through organic growth, through collaboration and through mergers or acquisitions.

We recognise that the Machinery of Government changes are inviting colleges to think creatively about their future. Who knows how big a college could be in 10 years time? Bigger than the biggest university?

Jackie Fisher is principal and chief executive of the Newcastle College Group

Colleges set the pace

Community

First principles from the principals

How do colleges see their role and are they delivering on the aims of the group? Three leaders discuss what they and the sector can contribute to their communities, to society and to the economy as a whole

he aims of the 157 Group are ambitious and far-reaching: two years after its establishment, do principals feel that they are fulfilling their mission? We asked three 157 Group leaders – Peter Tavernor

of the Manchester college, Graham Moore of Stoke on Trent college and chair of the group, and John Latham of Cornwall college – to discuss the issues.

How much of a responsibility do the leaders of the biggest colleges have to enhance the reputation of the FE sector and how can they achieve this? How can they speak on behalf of other colleges? Do other colleges want them to do so?

PT: It is a vital part of that mission that I demonstrate, along with my leadership team, a commitment to raising quality, working in partnership and seeking continuous improvement throughout the college sector. It would be arrogant to believe all colleges want such leadership, but there are some very good examples where large numbers of colleges have responded to initiatives led by the Manchester college.

GM: Andrew Foster, the government and the 157 Group all agree in principle that a mature, responsive and responsible sector can assume an increased responsibility for its actions and be able to implement government strategy without micromanagement from an intermediary. Some of the best managers in the whole education system are found in FE colleges. Unlike [university] vice-chancellors, college principals have been content to focus on the delivery of their colleges’ mission, and as a result, FE has been appreciated locally but underestimated nationally. Because we believe we have a pivotal role to play in the prosperity of the nation we must punch our weight with both central and local government and with employer organisations. 157 Group principals are some of the most experienced and successful in the sector and we can and should influence policy. We do not presume to speak on behalf of all colleges or the whole sector, although we believe that the policies that we advocate will bring benefits to the whole sector.

JL: Reputation management is a simple concept, and most colleges, including us, have recognised they could do better, especially where employers are concerned. I don’t think we speak on behalf of other, individual colleges; we speak on behalf of ourselves and the sector as we experience it, and we work closely with industry leaders and other colleges, not necessarily 157 Group members. We learn things and we share things, ultimately because we want to become better colleges.

Do principals of large colleges have enough time to become involved in national representation as well as run their institutions properly?

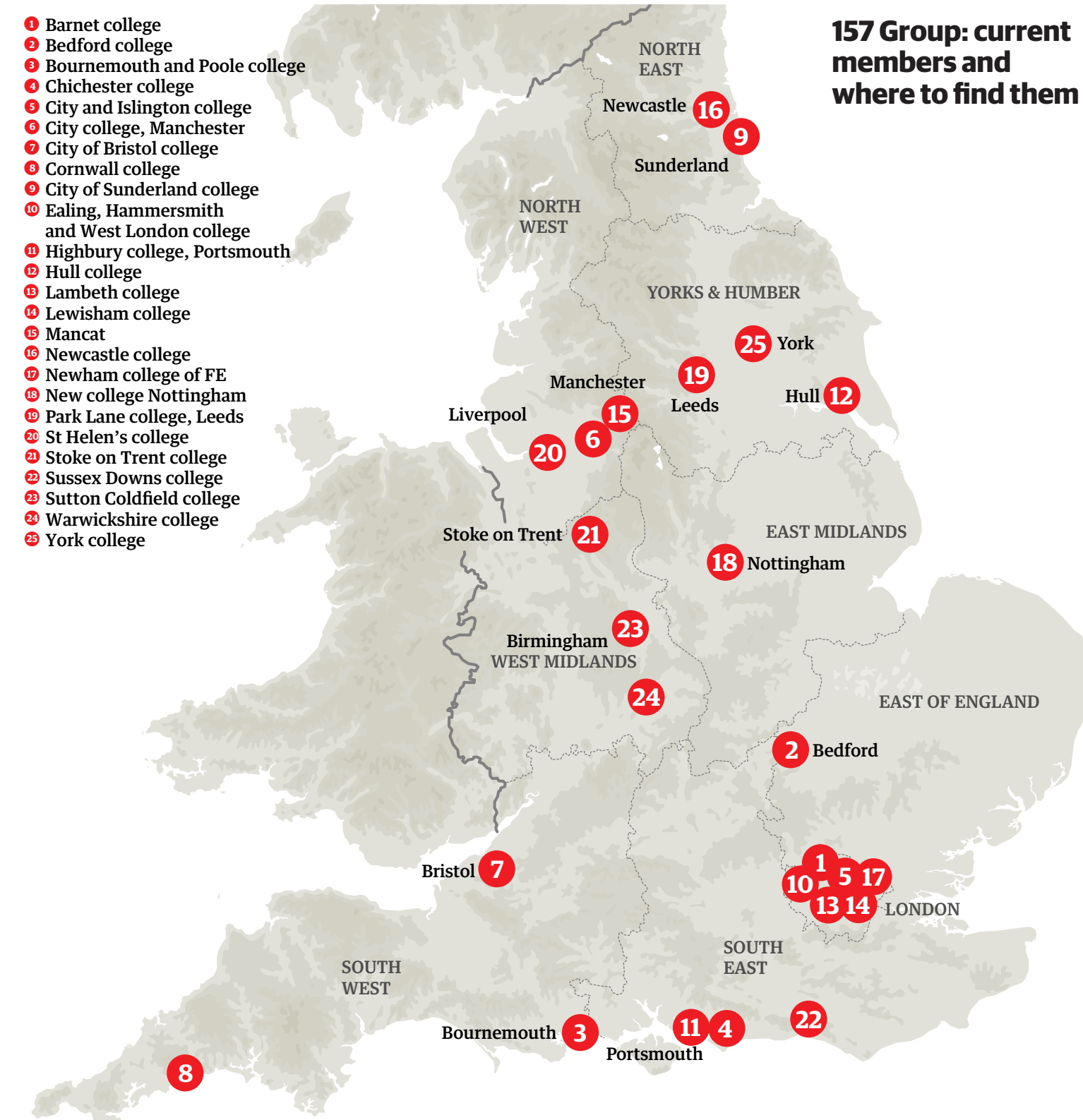
PT: Managing a large college makes an immense demand on a principal and this is precisely why a leadership team is so important. However, a principal or team who devotes too much time outside is either complacent or stupid. It’s a matter of balance.

GM: For all of us, our college must come first. However, we have responsibilities to help the sector and the government develop the best possible FE service for the nation: this cannot be entirely trusted to politicians. Sion Simon, the new FE minister, cheerfully admits to having much to learn about FE, so it is in all our interests to help him. With a sensible balance and supportive governors and managers you can make a valuable contribution at national level.

JL: It is vital that Cornwall has a voice in the national education arena; membership of the 157 Group has afforded us a closer link to government decision-makers and a very real opportunity to make and shape future education policies. I’m sure other principals feel the same way.

How can these principals demonstrate how society benefits from their colleges and help boost the economy and develop fulfilled citizens?

PT: A starting point would be to account directly for its contribution to government priorities, ie social inclusion or widening participation, overall success rates, employer engagement, work



John Latham: ‘We learn and we share’

‘We have responsibilities beyond our colleges to help the sector and the government develop the best possible service’



Tavernor: ‘Leadership team is important’

with minority communities and the effective participation of students with learning difficulties and disabilities.

GM: Every principal has to work with their communities to explain the roles their colleges play in supporting them. We always hope that our students and employers will be our greatest advocates. Because many of our students are not drawn from the chattering classes, their voices can get overlooked, which is why we need to celebrate their successes. Some politicians still think of education in terms of school and university and we need to pull them in to our colleges to open their eyes and to astonish them with our student’s achievements. We must exploit those many satisfied employers to become our advocates.

JL: Working with industry is important, we need to get on the front foot with employers and demonstrate the value of training to them. This is something we’ve worked hard to demonstrate and communicate. That ability to have a positive impact on businesses and



Moore: ‘Celebrate learners’ successes’

employers is, after all, the growing mission for FE.

What can larger colleges offer industry that smaller colleges cannot?

PT: The amount of investment in specialist capital equipment, materials and in staff that is required for us to be credible to industry is very significant and often out of the reach of small organisations. An up-to-date knowledge of the specialist area requires networking with the industry and with other organisations which can be time-consuming as well as costly. There needs to be a critical mass of specialist staff for this to be sustained and shared, which is less likely to exist in a small college.

GM: Large colleges offer the range and quality that is not always possible in smaller colleges. Most large colleges have big, robust business-facing operations with a willingness to work regionally or nationally as required. They will have the resources to secure the new quality standards, such as the Training Quality Standard, have experience of

working with many similar organisations and often have specialist staff drawn from the relevant business sector. They will have networks beyond the college to ensure that they can respond to most employer training requests and respond in a flexible and timely fashion with – if necessary – bespoke products.

JL: Size is just one of a few factors governing membership to the 157 Group; it’s not the only factor and not necessarily the most important one. Every college in the UK has a responsibility to offer high-quality learning and training: it doesn’t matter whether your income is £6m or £60m. I feel pretty confident when I say delivering quality is a responsibility that the whole FE sector accepts.

Are larger colleges better able to engage with employers than others and if so, why?

PT: An understanding is required of employment sectors, of local and regional economic conditions, and of funding priorities and methodologies, as well as of the training to be delivered. Additionally, employers demand excellent quality and customer service. It would be very difficult to achieve the required investment in all of this without significant training activity to justify the overhead. Many smaller colleges will find it difficult to obtain the new Training Quality Standard, for example.

GM: We have bigger CRM [customer relations management] and business development teams with a greater depth of experience and more support systems to ensure we deliver what we promise.

JL: We’ve become a group of colleges which has a very powerful voice. Yes, because of our size, but also because of our recognised leadership ability and our industry contacts – these factors mean we are influential. That’s good news for all colleges.

Colleges set the pace Collaboration

'It's about acting together and learning'



Bureaucracy in t he form of data collecting can cost a large college up to £500,000 a year

Leading voices are calling for a peer-review system for colleges to reduce the bureaucracy and number of Ofsted inspections

Joe Clancy

A decade or so ago in colleges, data collection was generally carried out by a vice-principal and an administrative assistant. They would sit down together for a few days each year perusing registers to compile facts and figures.

Today a typical college will employ between 20 and 30 people full-time to carry out that same task, as requests for information from the many organisations that regulate the sector come flooding in. The cost to a large college of all this bureaucracy can top £500,000: a figure often more than 1% of its income.

Demand for information

The biggest demand from a government agency for information on how the college is performing comes from the Learning and Skills Council, which provides the funding for colleges. Behind that agency is Ofsted, the inspectorate.

In addition to their demands, a college will also face requests for information from local and national government as well as from auditors, Connexions, the Student Loans Company, employers and training companies, not to mention the 125 examination boards.

Marilyn Hawkins, principal of Barnet college in north London, says that colleges are "the most regulated in the public sector". In her view, colleges and private training organisations should be allowed

to operate with the minimum interference from external agencies, to regulate themselves and be responsible for their own quality improvement. That is why she is playing a leading role in the 157 Group's campaign for self-regulation.

"We at 157, together with many colleges in the sector, support the principles of self-regulation," she says. "We are committed to the principle of the sector being able to regulate itself and to reduce the levels of audit, intervention and bureaucracy that the sector is subject to."

Under self-regulation, colleges would no longer be subjected to the annual assessment visits from Ofsted inspectors and a full inspection every four years. Colleges would instead monitor each other's performance through a process called peer review.

A peer review process would involve staff from other colleges discussing the self-assessment report with governors, senior managers, employers and learners, to judge its performance and to work with that college to support improvement.

The process would offer "positive peer intervention" at an early point if an institution were showing signs of failing to reach the required standards. Where colleges are satisfactory and not making progress fast enough, processes to share good practice with other colleges would be set up.

"They would form a small team and take a view as to whether the other institution was carrying out an accurate self-

'If we can reduce the admininstration burden, we could free up resources for teaching and learning'

Changes reflect growing confidence in sector



Pat Bacon
Comment

A flurry of headlines greeted the news earlier this year that the government was to extend the powers to accredit learning. What was less well reported was that the first college, City College Norwich, had been granted the powers alongside three other employers including McDonald's.

This opportunity for colleges to validate provision followed earlier legislation, which meant that colleges could apply to validate foundation degrees. The other message largely missed is that there are employers looking for accredited skills development to enhance their business performance.

What excites me about these developments is that they reflect a growing confidence in the role of general further education colleges such as St Helens, as well as enhancing our reputation. The 157 Group is well placed to maximise the opportunity, as we are able to meet the criteria that attach to these proposals.

There is a thread that fits with self-regulation, since 157 is keen to play a leadership role in the single voice through peer review, partnership with the new quality improvement body LSLIS and building capacity within the sector.

St Helens college is exploring the opportunity to award its own qualifications. As the Association of Colleges' national skills champion for health and care, I am in discussions with leading employer bodies to explore potential gaps in the qualification landscape.

Above all, this has to be right for the learner in terms of quality, standards, coherence and recognition. For the employer it has the potential to provide a quality-assured skills solution. For the

assessment and whether responses, targets and other actions were the best they could be," says Hawkins.

"It is about providers acting together and learning from each other to improve, and the sector feeling that it is best placed to tackle under-performance. There is an aspiration that all providers will be good to excellent. Peer support is particularly valuable in getting from good to excellent.

"The 157 Group is very keen to use its experience in producing high-quality teaching and learning and share that with the wider sector where it is needed. One of our value sets is not to tell others what to do but to share it."

Ofsted's role

In this brave new world, however, there would still be a role for Ofsted. "The public, including our stakeholders, understand Ofsted's role and the need and importance of regular external inspection," Hawkins adds. "We would all agree that Ofsted has a continuing role. Ofsted would still inspect, but less often and in a less detailed way. It is about minimising administration and bureaucracy and reducing the unnecessary demands on us.

The beneficiaries, she says, will be the learners. "If we can reduce the administration and bureaucratic burden, we could free up resources for teaching and learning. Within the increased transparency of self-assessment, I think we are doing much more by responding to feedback of students and employers."

She says it will also lead to better relationships with employers and college communities. "[They] are being asked through a whole range of mechanisms what they think and we are acting on that. We are listening to the learner and the employer voice, and that is helping to drive up quality."



McDonald's has gained accrediting power

college it enhances our reputation and increases our responsiveness – but it comes with a price tag.

Writing one's own curriculum is certainly not new. Edexcel allowed for a system of centre-devised units which colleges produced to meet the requirements of employers and career paths.

St Helens college has been working with Jaguar over a number of years and supported them through their management of change programme. Working with an existing examination board, our staff developed a new qualification that improved the skills of the workforce with the aim of supporting the production of new models at Jaguar.

The option now would include the opportunity to accredit that programme to St Helens college. With an exam bill for 2007-08 approaching £1.2m, we look carefully at the value for money that move represents.

The most important benefits from awarding our own qualifications include the ability to show we are responsive to employers' needs and the advantage they give to the learner.

Pat Bacon is principal of St Helens college, St Helens, Lancashire

Colleges set the pace Leadership

Large but perfectly formed

Principals of bigger colleges must adopt a management style that means they are willing to share power at every level

Neil Merrick

Although large colleges are not necessarily more difficult to run than their smaller counterparts, they generally require a different style of leadership.

At a smaller college, it is not unreasonable to expect senior managers to know their colleagues by name. But this is virtually impossible in an institution with as many as 2,000 staff and perhaps 40,000 students.

At the same time, the principal of a large college is likely to be an important person in the community – regularly rubbing shoulders with the chair of the local authority and other senior figures. This will almost certainly mean they spend less time in their college and delegate to others.

Lynne Sedgmore, former chief executive of the Centre for Excellence in Leadership, believes colleges in the 157 Group must "push the boundaries of leadership" and set new standards. "It's about coming together and practising leadership at its best," says Sedgmore, now an executive director of the group. "We can learn and grow together as a peer group with some of the best leadership talent there is."

Large colleges are sophisticated organisations that require effective leadership, she says. Many principals therefore opt for a "distributive" style that allows others to take responsibility and make decisions. "It means that they are willing to share power and support leaders at every level," she says.

Constant review

Elaine McMahon, principal of Hull college, stresses that excellent leaders can be found in colleges of all sizes. But having moved from Salford, a far smaller college, she sees clear differences in the way things are run at a bigger institution.

"The same over-arching approach can work in terms of what you expect in leadership quality. Leadership should run as a thread through an organisation, not just from the top. "But you operate differently as a leader in a small college. You are physically closer to your staff and your communication style is different."

According to Marilyn Hawkins, principal of Barnet college, leadership is only effective if it is kept under constant review. "It's like communication. While you strive for excellence, you must continue to work on it," she says. "It's something that you never get perfect."

Barnet is spread across seven sites. Its seven directors report directly to Hawkins, giving it a flat management structure that depends on staff taking individual responsibility. "People are encouraged to enhance their leadership and management skills at all levels," she says.

Hawkins is reluctant to depict 157 Group colleges as exemplars for others, preferring to see them as setting standards for teaching and learning. But their sheer size means that they assume extra importance within their communities.

"157 can offer a distributive leadership



In front: larger colleges need a different style of leadership

model while leading on community place-shaping," she says. "We are a big college in the largest London borough and a key strategic partner with the local authority."

With an annual turnover of £25m, Bedford college is one of the smallest colleges in the 157 Group, although it meets the group's quality threshold for inspections grades. Ian Pryce, Bedford's principal, says the credibility of FE partly depends

on the group showing strong leadership locally and nationally. "It needs senior people that command respect across the sector and can punch their weight with government departments."

In isolated cases, smaller colleges have turned to colleges in the 157 Group for guidance. There have even been suggestions that principals of 157 colleges should act as mentors for

principals who are less experienced.

But Angela O'Donoghue, principal at City of Sunderland college, says such moves should only take place with the consent of smaller colleges.

"If you are a large player in your region, you can give support and leadership to other colleges, both regionally and nationally. But they must request it. You can't force it."

Challenges remain



Sir Andrew Foster
Comment

I have kept in touch with events across the learning and skills sector as I have remained interested in the development and contribution of FE colleges. Important areas have changed, but some aspects remain as challenges.

I am pleased that the voice of the learner has become more centre-stage. I welcome the formation of a national learner panel and the introduction of processes that encourage and enable better engagement and representation of students. Learner focus is the purpose of FE and must be emphasised.

Significant progress has been made in extending and enhancing employer engagement and focusing on the economic mission of colleges. There is always more to be done, but I believe that the profile and reputation of colleges is improving and the dialogue between individual employers and organisations such as CBI, IOD and the new Skills Commission is becoming more active and sophisticated. Both sides need each other and need to approach this with maturity.

While the "galaxy of stars" has raised debate and some national agencies have merged and the role of others has been revisited, I am still not convinced that there are fewer agencies overall. Resources need to be focused at the front line and the top management needs to be as firm with itself as it is with the system.

Aspirations and plans for more autonomy and self-regulation are centre-stage, but a more coherent and radical proposition needs to be made with much stronger sector agreement and buy-in. This can make a real contribution to the autonomy of colleges and the maturity of the system.

I continue to question how much additional money is going direct to the front line as a result of changes to national agencies. As patron I support the formation of the 157 Group through which the large colleges come together to contribute to the raising of quality, staff capacity, reputation, employer engagement and community cohesion.

Paragraph 157, which inspired the group's existence and mission, was intended to tackle the lack of understanding and awareness of the economic and social contribution of the FE sector.

My intention was to encourage sector-wide leadership, not to create an elitist group which alienates. I believe that challenge to the Association of Colleges (AoC) is a good thing. Strong partnership between 157 and AoC can only strengthen the sector.

Sir Andrew Foster carried out an independent review of the future role of FE colleges. His findings were published in November 2005

The future Self-regulation

Should an authority exist with the power to close poorly performing colleges and other institutions delivering post-16 education and training? This is one proposal in a prospectus for self-regulation published by The Single Voice, a group recently set up to promote self-regulation in the FE sector.

It is recommending that an FE authority be set up to oversee the implementation and management of a self-regulation regime. The authority would be run by members of the learning and skills sector and not by external agencies.

"The proposal would give the FE authority the clout to license providers or to remove licences from providers," explains Marilyn Hawkins, principal at Barnet college, who helped to shape the prospectus for the group. She says it will

mean "the clout" will be taken away from Ofsted and the Learning and Skills Council and placed in the hands of the sector itself, which would take increased responsibility for performance and reputation with reduced levels of external regulation. A consultancy period will enable the sector to discuss issues raised in the prospectus

"The debate will focus on whether there should be a separate sector-wide and sector-driven FE authority," says Hawkins. "It would be focused on positive intervention. The initial reaction is that it would look like another tier. It cannot be another tier. It has got to replace some of the interventions [by various education bodies] that are already there. The sector will [decide how it will run]. It is going to be a very evolving picture."

The prospectus states that the authority's role would be to "ensure that every provider delivers the excellence that learners, employers, and communities deserve, and that the nation pays for."

Sir George Sweeney, a former college principal and chair of The Single Voice, has been working on projects to reduce bureaucracy in FE for nearly a decade. He says that the sector has come of age, and with maturity comes the right to self-regulation and autonomy, but "it is not prepared to tolerate under-performing provision."

"It recognises that eligibility for public funding is not a long-service medal but a privilege earned through the gritty business of performance management and the self-discipline of daily accountability." **JC**

Managing change Rolls-Royce drives Chichester's improvement

Employers are expected to play a greater role in helping colleges to run like finely tuned engines and deliver higher-quality teaching and learning under self-regulation processes.

Colin Whitaker, the quality director at Chichester college in West Sussex, says employers are already supporting his college in improving its performance.

The college has been building a relationship with Rolls-Royce since the car-maker moved its manufacturing plant and head office to Goodwood, just outside Chichester.

As part of that relationship, Rolls-Royce's business excellence manager spent six months working with the college to develop a more effective management model. During this time the college's self-assessment report was examined.

"Rolls-Royce helped us identify areas for improvement in the college," Whitaker explains. "We now have a much clearer focus on managing processes that impact on achievement."

"We introduced a process management improvement approach which looks at how things work across the college rather than in individual departments. Working with them enabled us to crystallise our thinking."

As a result, a cross-college personal tutorial system was introduced and a review of data and information services was undertaken.

"The intention was to free up time – for the teaching staff in particular – from



Reaching the community: Shelagh Legrave and Colin Whitaker of Chichester college

the burden of providing data," he says.

Chichester is also a member of a group of colleges in the county called FE Sussex, in which employers are invited on to validation panels. It is, he believes, the type of collaboration that self-regulation will further foster.

Shelagh Legrave, chief financial officer at the college, was astonished by the number of agencies the college was accountable to when she moved there

from a university. "Further education is much more complicated," she explains. "The variety of qualifications is enormous."

This inevitably requires more administration but she adds: "Our first priority is world-class teaching and learning. We work really hard to take the burden of administration away from lecturers."

JC

Colleges set the pace Standards



Big is beautiful: City and Islington college delivers high-quality teaching across its sites – and expects high standards from staff and students

How to make sure you stay on Quality Street

Big colleges face a challenge in keeping their standards up and delivering consistent teaching across several sites – so how do they manage it

Simon Midgley

Just how do large, multi-site further education colleges ensure that the education and training they deliver in all their locations is equally high quality? This is a question facing managers of colleges in the 157 Group.

“You need to have a commitment from the top down that quality is the most important thing and that satisfactory is not good enough,” says Judy Stradling, deputy principal of the City of Bristol college, an institution with seven main sites, 35,000 full- and part-time learners, and 2,000 staff.

In a large college such as her own, this means that senior managers, middle managers and programme co-ordinators must shoulder the responsibility for ensuring high-quality education and training at all levels and stages.

A second key factor is the need for colleges to have an accurate and accessible data to enable them to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their provision. “We need information that can tell us how every single individual course is performing,” says Stradling. “Maintaining quality is about identifying where things are slipping and [acting] quickly to improve it.

“Colleges need to constantly re-examine themselves to find out where things are going well and identify the areas where

things need to improve. If you have a class that students are not attending, you know you have a quality issue there.”

Stradling’s college also has a central quality improvement unit with a manager and six staff, whose job it is to identify why things are going wrong. Quality managers are responsible for ensuring that each area of the curriculum, such as hair and beauty, is delivered consistently well across all seven college sites. As well as ensuring that standards of curricula provision are high, the college also looks at how it is performing with different client groups such as 16- to 18-year-olds, apprentices, adults in hard-to-reach areas, and those on the Train to Gain programme.

The City of Bristol college is also part of a peer review group, which includes City and Islington, Cornwall, Nottinghamshire and Sussex Downs colleges. The group members act as critical friends to each other and share good practice.

Ioan Morgan, the principal of Warwickshire college, which has six sites, a £52m turnover and is rated outstanding or good in every respect, says: “The issue is clearly when you have got six sites how do you ensure consistency in those campuses? We have to make sure that the hairdressing experience in Rugby is as good as in Leamington.”

His college achieves this by having one person responsible for ensuring quality in each of the curriculum areas, irrespective of where it is delivered. It is also introducing a pay system based on teaching performance.

It pays college inspectors privately to assess its lesson observation processes. “We carry out peer assessment with colleges from the 157 Group and they come to us to give us their view on our quality,” says Morgan.

“It’s a very open relationship; our

Sites for sore eyes City and Islington gets it right

City and Islington is the only college in London to be rated outstanding on all measures of achievement by Ofsted and among a select few in England to receive that accolade.	accountable for not reaching the same standards that are accepted as the norm across the rest of the college.”	What does the grade profile look like? Is there an issue here? A central teaching and learning unit offers support and help where there is under-performance.
Earlier this year Ofsted’s inspectors judged the college’s achievement and standards, effectiveness of provision, capacity to improve, quality of provision, leadership and management and equality of opportunity to be second to none.	The way the college is organised in five specialist centres – a sixth-form college; an adult lifelong learning centre; a centre for business, arts and technology specialising in vocational education; a centre for applied science; and a centre for health, social and childcare – replicates a sixth-form college model.	One key reason for the college’s success is its culture of high expectations. “People want to do well for their students and are highly competitive about who gets the best success rate,” says Rimington. “And that’s brilliant because it means the students benefit and, although we have hugely high expectations, we do not proscribe overmuch about how success is achieved.”
But City and Islington is big. So how does this four-site, five-centre institution scattered across the local borough manage to deliver uniformly top-class education and training in every subject and skill in all of its locations?	Each of the centres, which have a considerable degree of autonomy, has its own directors who meet every week with the senior management team jointly to determine policy across the college.	Managers are regularly assessed on measures such as their drive for results and their service orientation, and an achievement review regularly examines the results of each centre. “It’s a very liberal culture,” says Rimington, “but one with very high expectations of staff and students.” SM
“If there is something which is not consistent with our high standards and high expectations,” says Mary Rimington, one of the college’s deputy principals, “you shine a light on it, make sure it’s better and hold the managers	A series of quality assurance processes and systems ensure that standards are maintained. For example, a performance review system continually keeps an eye on how well various areas of the college are performing, asking such questions as are classroom observations being undertaken?	

quality team will visit their colleges. We are always learning – people bring exemplars of good practice from their own college and I hope that they will take away exemplars from us as well.”

“We are moving towards self-regulation and peer assessment. We being responsible for our own quality as a group is right at the heart of that. Although Ofsted is very useful as an external regulator, what is more important is a college’s view of itself – its own self-assessment.”

Richard Pilkington is director of curriculum, quality and development at Stoke on Trent college, which has 30,000 full- and part-time students being taught

on two main sites, 15 smaller sites in the community and in employer workplaces. He says good data and electronic monitoring systems are essential. The college, rated as good overall in its most recent Ofsted inspection last year, is developing an electronic register to monitor student attendance and punctuality.

Pilkington says other key factors are having clear targets; having leaders at all levels in the college who take responsibility for ensuring effective teaching and learning is taking place; efficient communications; good lesson observation processes; and robust systems of self-assessment and business planning.

Stoke on Trent college is also part of a peer review and development programme group that includes Warwickshire, York and Hull colleges and the car-maker, BMW. This shares best practice and acts as a critical friend.

Pilkington adds that the college works to a whole range of quality frameworks, such as Ofsted’s common inspection framework, the employer’s Training Quality Standard, the higher education integrated quality and enhancement review system and BSI ISO 9001, the international quality standard.

“We like testing ourselves against the market,” says Pilkington.

We are already world-class: a global league table would prove it



Geoff Hall
Comment

The publication of the world ranking lists for universities is an eagerly awaited event in the academic calendar. Collectively we know that the US comes first, the UK second and, apparently, Australia is third (not bad for a country of only 28 million people). But where is the FE equivalent? There isn’t one. But

if there were, I have no doubt what the pecking order would be: the UK would be number one.

This is a bold claim, given we have not yet agreed any criteria for this league, let alone begun to measure. So how can I make such a claim? After all, the government has declared its ambition to be a world-class system.

But the government has judged us on participation rates. Participation is a product of the schooling system, employment opportunities for the under-18s and many other factors besides. It is not itself a measure of the quality of institutions.

Deciding which institutions will be in this league will be more contentious than for universities where there is greater homogeneity. In the US, the word “college” is used to describe university and community colleges. Indeed, Barack Obama referred four times in his speech in Denver, when he accepted the Democratic presidential

‘No other country has our system of inspection. No other system has our robust standardised data collection. We are simply the best’

nomination. to the American promise of an “affordable college education”. The community college mission is unashamedly higher education; the curriculum is much more further education.

In Canada, higher and post-compulsory education are used interchangeably. Australia does have a distinct FE sector known as Tafe (technical and further education). As in Canada and the US, a college or an “institute” may be based on a multi-college or campus system. So there are definition issues. In Melbourne, two Tafes are contained within universities – the so-called dual-sector institutions.

As ever we cannot overlook size. Sorry, secretary of state, but most similar countries organise their further education establishments into larger units. Were we to do so, the 157 Group, which now has most of the largest colleges in England in membership, we would be well represented in the top 20 globally.

How can I be so confident? First, no

other country has our system of inspection based on classroom observation. Second, no other system has our robust, standardised data collection. As a result, we have attrition rates to die for, timely apprenticeship completions to sigh for and progression rates to lie for. We are simply the best.

So now the 157 group of colleges is proposing to develop with international partners a set of indicators to help define a world-class standard. Framework for Excellence is not a bad starting point.

If universities have been the leading education export earner of recent times, FE is the future as developing economies seek to grow a technician class. What the world needs now is a global league table of FE providers. That will be a league that Newcastle might have some chance of topping.

Geoff Hall is principal of New College, Nottingham

Colleges set the pace Two years on

Cinderella sector goes to the ball



Lewisham college's aim is to serve its community Frank Baron

The impact of what the group is trying to achieve is being felt widely, with principals getting involved at the highest levels

Janet Murray

When a clutch of the largest and most successful colleges in the country joined together in a membership group back in 2006, there was some unease. There were accusations of elitism and ego-rubbing. Critics were concerned the group could threaten existing membership organisations. But two years on, say members, its impact is being felt across the FE sector and beyond.

“The Foster Report highlighted the fact that we had a great story to tell that is not being told,” says Frank McLoughlin, principal of City and Islington college, north London. “Traditionally FE has been the Cinderella service. The problem is a lot of people don’t understand FE colleges. Schools are easy to understand, so are universities. But FE colleges are offering such a wide range of opportunities to such a wide range of people that you can see why people don’t always get it.”

What the 157 Group has done, says McLoughlin, is create a shop window for FE. And with the colleges continually striving to raise standards, the impact is being felt around the sector. McLoughlin is now “being asked to all the right tables to discuss the right matters”.

He has been invited to speak at events he'd never have been invited to before, including those on Machinery of Government changes. Along with civil servants, industry leaders and other college principals, he recently took part in a think session with John Denham, secretary of state for innovation, universities and skills, on

leadership in the economic crisis.

For John Latham, principal of Cornwall college, the opportunity to discuss policy matters with the group has been invaluable. “It is a complex sector where things are rapidly changing. It’s helpful to be able to share understanding and reactions to these changes with professionals in similar settings.”

Besides offering informal peer support, some members have formed peer review groups with other colleges, a crucial move as the sector moves towards self-regulation. Cornwall is working with City of Bristol, City and Islington and Sussex Downs colleges. As a result of the Bristol link, Cornwall has changed the ways its governing body is organised, assigning one governor to each curriculum area. It is also implementing some of the best practice in science, technology, engineering and mathematics seen at City and Islington. Similarly, Stoke on Trent college is changing to the way it records student data, based on what it has seen at Hull, while Lewisham college is working with Stoke to share good practice on personalised learning.

But the group is so much more than a mutual support group, says Graham Moore, principal at Stoke on Trent and



Ruth Silver: “Only time will tell”

chair of the 157 Group. “It’s satisfying to talk to colleagues who understand the issues, but it’s also about sharing excellence in leadership and management, creating leaders for the next generation.”

With this in mind, some groups of colleges are linking up their human resource directors and curriculum vice-principals to share good practice. Others are exploring the international agenda, particularly about how the group could work together to deliver education and training overseas.

Overseas business

“Collectively, the 157 group has 10,000 international students and does £20m-worth of overseas business a year,” says Latham. “We’re looking at how we could deliver our courses overseas. I’m not sure we could do this as individual colleges, but as a group it could really work.”

Initially resistant to the idea of 157, Dame Ruth Silver, principal of Lewisham college, has now joined the group. “My interests are to serve the local community, nothing else. At first, I was worried it would break the sector apart when we most needed to be together. I now realise that the best way to serve your community is to communicate with the best in the sector.”

“Only time will tell” how influential the group will be, says Silver. But, crucially, what the members do have in common is a shared understanding of the powerful place of the college in the community.

As Moore says: “Colleges have the resources to transform communities. For many, it can be a place to turn when things get difficult. What we need is recognition of that, particularly in times like these when we are heading towards a recession. Colleges need to be recognised and respected within the community, alongside schools, police, health and other agencies. The 157 group has a key role to play in making that happen.”

Positive First Impressions

I took up my new job as the first minister for further education (FE) just six weeks ago. And I feel very privileged to be in a role in which I can help people get on and do better in their lives.

My first impression of the sector is that those working on the frontline are passionate about what they do. I also recognise that colleges play a huge and diverse role in supporting individuals wanting to get on in life, wider society and the prosperity of our country. That’s why it is right that this week, the first ever Colleges Week, we speak up for colleges and all those involved in further education. Their role is too important to take for granted, providing education to enrich peoples’ lives, giving them the skills and training they need to grasp new opportunities at work and beyond – enabling people to realise their full potential and helping local businesses remain competitive.

Many people outside FE see it as the poor relation to higher education. I think this is wrong. Colleges offer so much to so many. Colleges up and down the country offer fantastic facilities, dedicated teachers and a wide range of courses for learners – whether they are improving their literacy skills, preparing for university, learning English for the first time, gaining high-level professional qualifications or taking classes purely for fun.

Further education colleges play a crucial role in supporting the wider economy. They help people access the training they need to improve their job prospects and enable employers to improve the skills of their workforce so they can weather the economic storm and capitalise on opportunities for growth.

Colleges have been undergoing a transformation in recent years and Government investment will continue to support their future ambitions. Earlier this year we

announced an unprecedented £2.3bn capital building programme, ‘Building Colleges for the Future’, which will provide every community in England with state of the art college facilities by 2015. This investment underlines our commitment to ensure that colleges benefit the wider communities they serve, as well as provide top class services for students. And that’s why we will expect companies benefiting from new contracts to build the colleges and learning facilities of tomorrow, to provide training plans, apprenticeships and other opportunities for their workers. After all, if firms are benefiting from public investment it is only right that the local community gets a share of the proceeds too.

All of us, including colleges themselves, need to do more to promote and highlight the good work that they do. They offer a shared space for people from a range of backgrounds – young, old, those in work, those seeking work, parents and employers. And they offer a huge range of learning from traditional academic qualifications like A-levels, to apprenticeships and on-the-job training through Train to Gain, so people can come together to fulfil their ambitions and build better lives for themselves, their families and community.

I am pleased to see the 157 Group showcasing its positive work and the benefits to employers and students in this supplement for Colleges Week.

I am still learning about all the work colleges are delivering for thousands of people every day. And with colleges across the country hosting their own celebrations this week, I look forward to learning a whole lot more.

www.collegesweek.org

Colleges Week

unlocking talent



Siôn Simon
Further Education
Minister

Peer support network saves time and money for FE

City and Islington College has saved months of costly and time-consuming research into the management of social networking systems like Facebook and YouTube, simply by asking a local information technology training company to look at the problem.

It is an issue that looms large for possibly hundreds of colleges as the new 14-19 Diplomas attract school children into the college for vocational courses. Sheron Burton, head of learning centres at the large north London college, said: *"If we have an open environment policy on access to social networking in our college, how do we manage this when there are young people who should actually be prevented from accessing this material?"*

"After all, we have a duty of care and, while we want to access fascinating stuff for their coursework, for example, on the US presidential elections, we have to accept that some other material is off limits."

Another potentially costly chore from which the college was saved by the helping hand of others was the design of an online portal that students could use as part of the new individual lesson plan (ILP). While City and Islington possessed the raw material, it is another partner college with specific niche expertise that is turning it into the right software.

And yet, barely six months ago, such opportunities would most likely have been missed. The system that is changing things rapidly for many is the Technology Exemplar Network. The initiative is being developed in the first phase by just 62 colleges and other providers which have formed groups for mutual support and development.

Jointly led by Becta and the Learning and Skills Council, the Technology Exemplar Network was developed as a direct result of feedback from research conducted in 2006-07. It showed that if colleges and training providers were to implement sustainable technologies, they would need evidence of what works.

So, in February 2008, nine colleges and one work-based learning provider, which had invested heavily in IT and had a good all-round approach to e-learning were awarded "Exemplar" status and given funding to set up mini-networks – leading the way in the effective use of technology for learning.

By offering peer support and sharing effective practice with other colleges and providers across the country it was thought the rest would learn rapidly from the best through a cascade of good research, development and practice. There was a strong imperative to do something to raise standards. Earlier research for Becta had suggested that only 25 per cent of colleges were at or near world-class standards in the use of learning technologies (a standard now referred to as e-mature). Becta had been charged with helping reach tough government targets to get 80 per cent of all schools and colleges to this standard by 2011.

This is no easy task, says Jane Williams, Executive Director, Further Education, Regeneration and Delivery at Becta. *"It means not only making the grade, but sustaining it. We know from our research that there's a steady increase in the proportion of colleges making the grade each year. But research has also shown that only a handful of colleges maintained this status from 2004 to 2006 – up to the point where we considered the new network approach."*

"Too often, colleges make strides then lose ground, either because they lack leadership and commitment or because IT developments are dominated by a group of enthusiasts who then move on."

The Network initiative is not operating in isolation but as part of a much wider Becta strategy, working with partners including the 157 Group and the Learning and Skills Improvement Service to ensure that collective effort makes a difference across the whole FE and skills system. Earlier this year saw the launch of 'Harnessing Technology'¹, a six-year "system-wide" strategy published on behalf of the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills and the Department for Children, Schools and Families. And there was Becta's first-ever implementation plan for technology in the FE system².

It amounts to a huge investment in order to develop a framework for self-assessment by providers, and a national prospectus to help teachers and trainers develop their technology skills and provide all staff with rapid access to relevant continuing professional development. *"There is a need to keep things moving and provide practical, tangible work with all our partners to support teachers, managers and support staff – everyone in the front line."*

For Steve McCormack, Vice Principal (Student Services and Business Development) at Alton College – an Exemplar college – the FE implementation plan focusing on national leadership and investment in this area is crucial. *"I have been involved with Becta for ten years. We were asked to submit an IT strategy and were given funding for it some time back. I led the college through the development and we started from a very low base."*

But with hard work across the college, there was a rapid turnaround and he believes the college as a whole has the experience to know what can go right and what can go wrong most times. *"One of my bugbears is that there is so much reinventing the wheel right around the country. If the Technology Exemplar Network can stop us having to reinvent the wheel at every turn and we can see where to take short cuts, it must be for the better."*

He is at one here with the City and Islington approach: *"Learn from others' mistakes; learn from our mistakes; seek help from others. With properly structured peer group support and dissemination of ideas, mistakes will be minimal because there will be the right level of sharing and co-operation."*

Remarkably, the early responses to the network initiative do suggest that the sharing is a two-way process. City and Islington and Alton are Exemplar colleges which have found solutions to problems in what often less advanced "Developing" providers have to offer. Some of City and Islington's solutions have come from an independent work-based learning provider, ITEC Learning Technologies.

Rebecca Barrington, Continuing Professional Development and Blended Learning Manager at South Devon College (another Exemplar), agrees. *"We may be the most advanced, but all six developing colleges in our mini-network have shown they have something to teach us."*

As the first phase of the initiative comes under review, there is some very positive feedback. Peer support and interaction is well liked as are the insights gained and the fact that good practice is recognised. There is a call for the initiative to continue and expand to cover the whole sector in a way that is aligned to the bigger Becta plan. What the participants are saying chimes with six essential points at the heart of the implementation plan:

- providers making well thought-out strategic investments
- staff who are confident and skilled in deploying technology
- teaching and learning supported by fit-for-purpose technology
- intelligent buildings and transformed learning spaces
- business systems made effective and efficient through technology
- discriminating learners and employers choosing what, where, when and how to learn – and doing so in a safe and secure environment.

1. becta.org.uk/harnessingtechnology

2. becta.org.uk/publications/feststrategy

