

# GTA England news

May issue

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## Skills Minister announces first new FE College for 20 years

Speaking at the Plaisterers' Hall, London on 30 April, Skills Minister Matthew Hancock pledged to end the divide between vocational and academic education.



Beginning with the statement **'people need the right skills to get jobs, and employers need skilled people to grow'**, the minister went on to outline what the government will do to narrow the gap in esteem between vocational and academic education. Mr Hancock's speech centred around addressing two challenges:

- The divide between academic and vocational education, and
- The divide between education and work.

The first, he said, is about attitudes and the relative value of vocational and academic education.

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## Minister responds with encouraging words ...

Please take a moment to visit our website and read Matthew Hancock's response to GTA England's letter of 24 February.

We wrote to thank the Minister for the opportunity for GTAs to bid into the Skills Infrastructure Capital Fund.

The Minister acknowledged our successes, and reinforced his keenness to give GTAs access to capital to allow them to develop. Mr Hancock also encouraged a GTA England response to the Technical Funding Consultation, which of course

has now been submitted. The GTA England response to the consultation can also be accessed in the Members area of the website.

**Visit the GTA England website to read the letter in full**





## Skills Minister.. (cont)

But traditionally, this divide has been more than a mindset – it has extended to government policy, resulting in low expectations and standards within the vocational education sector.

Mr Hancock emphasised the government's drive to restore rigour in the sector, by re-introducing high quality technical education, backed up by sound English and maths teaching. Since January, the government has announced the creation of new colleges in important sectors like rail, nuclear and software. These elite institutions will **'blur the line between vocational and academic'**. They will take learners from an early age, but go up to higher education level. They will be the best in the world, on a par with the best universities.

**The first new FE college in 20 years, Prospects College of Advanced Technology (known to us all as Prospects**

**Learning Foundation, our member GTA in Essex),** will involve employers as never before, said Mr Hancock. It will provide cutting-edge technical education in engineering, aviation, rail and construction to young people over 16. Prospects will train 1,000 students and 1,200 apprentices, making it one of the biggest GTAs nationally. Neil Bates, CEO, told us **'We are delighted that a GTA will be the first new FE College to be incorporated for 20 yrs. GTAs are specialist technical organisations whose governance is provided by employers. This is employer ownership at its best. Where we tread I hope others will follow...'**

We have, said the minister, record numbers of young people in apprenticeships. The government wants the 'new norm' for young people to be a choice between university and an apprenticeship, ending the divide between vocational and academic education.

In response to the second divide, Mr Hancock said that the government had introduced traineeships, to bridge the gap between education and work. It had set up Trailblazers, and further extended employer ownership, **'giving the power to employers to shape training'** to meet the needs of business.

GTA England and GTAs are keeping close to the action in Trailblazers, participating in two of those in the first phase. We will keep you informed of progress, both here in the newsletter and through face-to-face feedback at members' days.

**Please get in touch if you want us to raise issues on your behalf. To quote David Sherlock, Chair of Trustees at Prospects College 'the door is open for GTAs ...'**

## GTA England is invited to join Funding External Advisory Group

**The SFA's Funding External Technical Advisory Group (FETAG) acts in an advisory capacity to the Agency on funding matters.**

FETAG, along with the Qualifications Advisory Group (QAG) provides the Agency with joint advice on areas of common interest. FETAG establishes **'Task and Finish'** Groups to carry out detailed work on specific topics or issues. It is currently undertaking work related to the funding reforms generated by Trailblazer activity.

Membership includes nominated and agreed representatives from a range of organisations within the further education and skills sector. GTA England has been invited to represent the employer-owned GTA movement, an indication that we are increasingly viewed as a distinct and unique part of the FE sector.

## GTA England Non-Executive Board Vacancy: Employer representative

The board of GTA England has a non-executive vacancy for an employer representative to join our experienced team. The successful applicant will:

- be working at a senior strategic level in the engineering and manufacturing sector
- be involved in skills development of the organisation
- have an active understanding of the current political and economic landscape of the country's skills and education policy
- have a passion to support GTA England and its members objectives
- have sound judgment along with excellent communication skills and an ability to interact effectively with the Board members and a range of stakeholders is vital.

The post is non-remunerated although a contribution can be made to travelling expenses.

Interested employers will need to be able to commit time to this role. Board members are required to attend around six meetings per year, along with other events such as Members' Days and the Annual Conference.

**Please contact Mark Maudsley for a role profile (which is also available in the Members section of the website) and application form.**

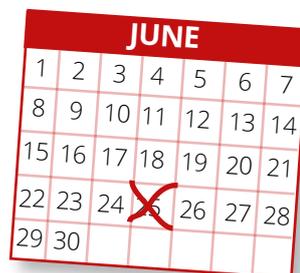
## Announcing....

**Agenda for GTA England Members' Day 25 June 2014: Apprenticeship Reform**

**Venue: JTL, 10 Mill Street, Mill Wharf, Birmingham B6 4BS**

So far we have these items on the agenda:

- Working with local stakeholders, LEPs and MPs
- Funding reform responses
- Update on capital funding
- Preparation for new forms of assessment
- How GTAs can prepare for employer-owned funding: pricing models, services to offer



To help us prepare for the day, we need some input from you. Please send us your thoughts; plans and questions related to these agenda items, and any other suggestions you would like included. Please also tell us how you are getting involved with your local LEPs, and how you work with your local MPs.

GTA England Board Champions will lead discussion on the topics related to their specialism. Visit [www.gta-england.co.uk/members/members-resources/](http://www.gta-england.co.uk/members/members-resources/), navigate to Consultations to find the Members Day Consultation document and send in your response.

## Check out the GTA England website for the proposed changes to our Memorandum and Articles



**In recent months the GTA England Board has reviewed its Memorandum and Articles of Association.**

As we reported at Members' Day in April, the Board has now completed its review of GTA England. Following substantial research the Board took the Exemplar from Companies House for organisations limited by guarantee, and compared this with the existing documents. These are broad and very generic but meet the requirements of the Companies Act.

We said on Members' Day that we would like your views on the new format. Please take a few minutes to read the Memorandum and Articles on the website and email us your feedback. There will be an opportunity to vote at the next members day.



## GTA England's thanks to Neil Bates for his 'unwavering support'

Neil Bates has announced he is stepping down from the Board of GTA England, due to the time commitment of his role as CEO of Prospects College of Advanced Technology.

**Lorna Unwin, Chair of GTA England, has thanked Neil, on behalf of the Board of GTA England.**

**Lorna said:** 'The GTA England Board would like to acknowledge the great contribution to the Board and the wider GTA network of Neil Bates, Group Chief Executive of the Prospects Learning Foundation, who has decided to step down from his role as a Board director. Neil was one of the founders of GTA England when it was established in 2009, having also been a Board member of its predecessor organisation, the National Partnership for Employer-Led Training,

Chairman of the Association of Learning Providers and of the National Training Federation. As many of you will know, Neil is spearheading the launch of the first incorporated FE college since 1993. Prospects College of Advanced Technology will be a specialist technical college based on the employer-led GTA model. Neil has emphasised that he and his colleagues will continue to be passionate advocates of GTAs and will continue to support GTA England.'

We welcome Neil's pledge of continued support for GTA England and the GTA network, and Prospects continues in membership.

The Board wished Neil and his staff all the best with developing Prospects as the first of the government's new incorporated FE colleges. This is a highly significant development for the future of high quality technical education and training, and puts GTAs at the forefront of the government's strategy.

**Neil said:** 'I am pleased to have made a contribution to the formation and development of GTA England. I believe passionately in the work GTAs do and I am glad that through GTA England we have found a voice and some influence.'

## Review of National Occupational Standards (NOS) and NVQ Qualification Structures

Semta's Standards and Qualifications department is leading a UK wide review of key National Occupational Standards (NOS) and NVQ qualification structures within our sector.

The review runs from April 2014 to November 2014 and includes a UK- wide employer and stakeholder consultation.

### How can you get involved?

Please take this opportunity to take part in the review of the standards.

Contact the Semta Standards team at:  
[standards@semta.org.uk](mailto:standards@semta.org.uk)

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