

## **News story: Venturefest West Midlands: connect with businesses and investors**

Entrepreneurs, innovators and investors are invited to a free one-day networking event to promote UK business innovation and growth.

Venturefest West Midlands gives you the chance to meet, collaborate and exchange business ideas with other businesses and investors. The event – supported by Innovate UK – will be held at the [Birmingham National Exhibition Centre](#) (NEC) on Tuesday 27 June 2017. Entry is free.

### **Science and emerging technologies**

The event theme is science and emerging technologies. You will be able to meet with high-growth entrepreneurs and service providers offering products, services, advice and support.

Venturefest will include keynote speakers and interactive workshop sessions. Innovate UK board member and managing director of Thomas Swan & Co. Ltd, Harry Swan, will speak about supply chain innovation. Representatives from Innovate UK, the [Knowledge Transfer Network](#), the [Enterprise Europe Network](#) and [Catapults](#) will be there to meet attendees and answer questions.

The programme will also include Pitchfest, featuring the region's most innovative companies pitching for support in front of a panel of experts.

### **About the Venturefest Network**

Innovate UK and the Knowledge Transfer Network launched the [Venturefest Network](#) in 2014. Its aim is to strengthen connectivity between innovators, investors and entrepreneurs.

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## **Speech: Amanda Spielman's speech at the Sixth Form Colleges Association**

Thank you Bill. It is a pleasure to be here and to be speaking to you all today. This is my first speech since the election last week, and it's certainly been a remarkable week. And I should start by congratulating Justine Greening for her reappointment as Education Secretary and, of course, welcoming the new Minister for apprenticeships and skills, Anne Milton, about whom I have heard very good things.

But, I am still standing here, 6 months into my tenure as Chief Inspector. And what a busy and rewarding 6 months it has been. I am constantly amazed by the boundless energy and commitment shown by everyone I meet across all the sectors we work with. Given that our education system reflects the quality of the people who work in it, this is very reassuring. We are indeed lucky to have the most talented generation of college and school leaders in our history.

But let's not pretend that everything is perfect. Times are challenging. I am acutely aware of the changes you have faced as a sector over the last few years, and the challenges that you are facing now.

Funding is probably the greatest – and I'll talk about that later – but, more generally, our post-16 landscape is changing and is looking very different to the one we had 5 years ago. Many colleges are merging, and I know that many sixth form colleges have, or are considering, becoming academies.

So I want to start by reassuring you that Ofsted does understand these challenges, and the uncertainty that they can bring. We certainly don't want to make it harder for you to navigate an increasingly complex and shifting policy landscape. Because it is vital, through all of this change, that we do not lose sight of the reason we are all here: to improve education for young people.

Of course, one other significant change is uppermost, as we near the end of exam season. The new A-levels. During my time at Ofqual, I was deeply involved in designing and seeing through the new linear A-levels. This may make a few of you want to throw things at me; but, I have heard more and more good things as I have talked to A-level teachers over the past 2 years.

So I am proud of the new A-levels, but at the same time, I know how much work there will have been for all of you, both in the planning and in the teaching of the new courses – as well as the exams themselves. This is the first year in so many subjects, and the first year is the hardest for everyone! This must have been a stonker of a year for you, so thank you.

I also know that when curricula and exams change, there is uncertainty. So I offer you this reassurance: in a year of change, we know that results are less predictable, and will be making sure that all our inspectors know that too. We have already been doing that with inspectors for GCSE and if we haven't done that yet for A levels we will be soon. In truth, I think we should be getting away from the idea that accurate predictions of exam grades are an essential component of good management. Time spent on making and re-making predictions is time not spent on teaching.

## **Demanding the best**

The good news is that sixth form colleges face these 2 challenges, funding and curriculum, from a position of strength. You have been for years, in many ways, the jewel in the crown of the post-16 sector. Of all the forms of post-16 education, your colleges provide a particularly high level of quality. And this good work extends beyond results, to your wider success in

preparing sixth formers for the next stage.

The best of you are characterised by strong leadership and governance, effective teaching, a supportive learning environment, and by real academic success. It is pleasing to see high qualification achievement rates across most sixth form colleges. And progression rates to higher education, including for disadvantaged students, are also very good.

But again, I cannot pretend that the sixth form college family is without problems. There has been a decline in inspection outcomes during this academic year, with a number of colleges dropping to 'requires improvement'. During this year, I think we have inspected 23 colleges and 10 of those colleges were risk-assessed as requiring a full inspection. Of these 10, 7 declined from 'good' or 'outstanding' to 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate', with inspectors finding that students weren't making the progress they were capable of.

While for now, this is about a small number of inspections, no one can afford to be complacent. It is vital that leaders and managers in these colleges understand what lies behind these performance dips, and take the right action. On a more positive note, of the 8 short inspections completed this year, it is encouraging that 6 colleges remained 'good' and 2 improved to 'outstanding' – my warm congratulations to Birkenhead and St John Rigby Sixth Form Colleges.

## **The curriculum**

These 2 colleges remind us how it can be done. They show that they understand the very point I made earlier: as a sector we must not lose sight of why we are here. Beyond everything else, what matters is the quality and real substance of the education young people receive.

That is why, earlier this year, we began a review of curriculum, in all of our education remits. Because, important as exam results are, we must not allow curriculums to be driven just by GCSEs and A levels or by what students believe will help them get the highest grades. It is the substance of education that ultimately creates and changes life chances, not grade stickers from exams. What you study matters, not just the grade points. So I am determined to make sure that the curriculum gets the proper attention it deserves.

In our survey, part of what we are looking to understand is whether the curriculum has real meat, and isn't just sliding into narrowed exam question training. I have asked our inspectors to go in as observers – this is about gathering evidence, not making judgements – in colleges and schools around the country. What they have found already is raising a lot of interesting questions.

Of course one of the important dimensions of the curriculum is study programmes. We have already learnt a lot about the impact of these programmes on colleges. Last year, we made 30 visits to outstanding providers, including 10 sixth form colleges. This evidence is also informing our study.

And although we will start publishing findings from September, this will be a long-term project. It is also not a project we are doing in isolation. We have drawn together a group of experts from a range of backgrounds to advise on the research. We are drawing on research from others: for example we have been chewing over the recent Education Datalab findings about the reduction in the number of A-levels being taken by the typical student.

I know that the curriculum is an issue close to your association's heart, with the range of workshops you are already running on the issue, as well as your 2015 survey 'Costing the sixth form curriculum'. So clearly, you have a great deal of expertise to share, and I'm delighted that you are supporting our work. It has been striking how many other stakeholders are also pleased that we are doing this work.

And one final curriculum-related point – as I have said before, whether the GCSE resits. Policy has the right intent, but it is perfectly reasonable to ask whether it is having the desired effect. And while I appreciate it doesn't impact on SFCA members as much as other parts of the FE family, this is still important to resolve.

## **Funding**

Now, before you all start asking me difficult questions, let me be absolutely clear. Of course, I realise that the curriculum is linked to funding. There is always going to be a tipping point, at which the funding of colleges affects the curriculum they can offer.

It is striking, and concerning, to see the feedback in the most recent SFCA survey of members. I am sure I don't need to remind you of the highlights: two thirds of you have dropped courses due to funding concerns. More than a third reported having to drop a modern foreign language course. Nearly two thirds have removed or reduced enrichment activities. This is not comfortable reading.

Taken in isolation these figures could be depressing, but I take comfort knowing that sixth form colleges are remarkably efficient in using resources to maximise curriculum time. Inspection findings show that the best providers of study programmes are those with the largest numbers of A-level students, regardless of whether the provider is a school sixth form, general FE, or sixth form college.

However, it is post-16 education that has borne the greatest weight of education cuts in recent years, with schools remaining relatively, and I stress relatively, protected. While there have been some recent moves to level the playing field, it is clear, as recently highlighted by the Institute for Fiscal Studies, that colleges remain the poor relation in the wider education sector.

It is telling that such high proportion of you are actively considering the move to academy status. I think it is safe to assume that many of you are motivated by the VAT handicaps that disadvantages you relative to your school sixth-form contemporaries. But I am interested if there are other factors as

well.

And it is absolutely right for you to be thinking about how best to deliver a sustainable future for your colleges. Ultimately, your survival, and with it the continued provision of quality education for so many young people, is at stake. I absolutely recognise that all this change has created much extra work. But a word of caution. Please don't let this distract you from the first priority: of ensuring that the young people you serve get the best possible education.

For my part I promise you this. We have always been proud of our ability and willingness to speak truth to power, and that will not change in my tenure. Let me repeat the message I have given your colleagues in schools and in the wider FE and Skills community. You can be sure that where we find standards are suffering, as a result of inadequate funding, we will not hold back from delivering that message.

Part of what we do is reporting on individual institutions and part of what we do is aggregating that information. And more generally we will never be afraid to say what needs to be said.

I am determined that Ofsted is regarded as a force for improvement. We will highlight outstanding practice and recognise where leadership and management are performing well. But, equally, where we see the need for improvement, we will say so.

This is as true at a system level as for individual colleges. With the wealth of evidence we hold, we are exceptionally well placed to see the bigger picture of what is happening across all the different areas we inspect. We can spot the trends; see emerging issues before they take hold and raise flags when needed.

I am determined that we use this privileged position for the benefit of everyone with a role in the education of our children.

So coming back to the national landscape, the future has seldom looked less certain. There are undoubtedly challenges ahead for all of us in this changing landscape. I do have every confidence that the sixth form college family is ready to meet them.

Thank you.

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## **News story: VCSE Health and Wellbeing Alliance members announced**

New alliance aims to bring the voluntary, community and social enterprise

sector's voice and expertise into national policy making.

On 20 April 2017, the Department of Health announced the 21 members of the new voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) Health and Wellbeing Alliance.

They are:

- Age UK
- Association for Young People's Health
- British Institute of Learning Disabilities
- Complex Needs Consortium
- Carers UK
- Citizen's Advice
- Clinks
- Faith Action
- Friends, Families and Travellers
- Homeless Link
- LGBT Foundation
- Maternity Action
- Men's Health Forum
- Mental Health Partnership Forum
- National Voices
- National Association for Voluntary and Community Action
- National Council for Voluntary Organisations
- National Council for Palliative Care
- Race Equality Foundation
- UK Health Forum
- Win-Win Alliance

The members were selected from over 180 organisations that applied to join.

The alliance aims to make it easier for the voluntary and statutory sectors to work together to:

- improve health and care systems
- address health inequalities
- help people, families and communities to achieve and maintain wellbeing

It also aims to bring the VCSE sector's voice and expertise into national policy making.

The alliance succeeds the Health and Care Strategic Partner Programme which ended on 31 March 2017.

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# Speech: Queen Elizabeth II 91st Birthday Celebrations in Tanzania

Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation, Dr Augustine Mahiga. members of Parliament, officials of the Government of Tanzania, distinguished members of the Diplomatic Corps ladies and gentlemen, karibuni nyumbani kwa Balizi wa Uingereza, kusherehekea siku ya kuzaliwa kwa Malkia Elizabeth wa pili . Welcome to the British High Commissioner's Residence, to celebrate the official birthday of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II.

Her Majesty is 91 years old this year. She continues to serve the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth with the same energy, commitment and sense of duty she has shown since her coronation over 60 years ago.

This Queen's Birthday celebration reminds me that I have nearly reached a full year serving as British High Commissioner here in Tanzania.

Over that time, it has been an enormous pleasure to travel this beautiful country and see for myself the breadth and the strength of the UK's partnership with Tanzania.

The UK is Tanzania's largest foreign investor and second largest bilateral donor.

But I have realised in my short time here that there is much more to our partnership beyond these headlines.

In Kagera, I joined HE President Magufuli to lay the foundation stone for the school which UK aid is helping to rebuild after last year's earthquake. Our ability to respond quickly and decisively is what sets us apart in responding to Tanzania's needs.

In Arusha, I joined Filbert Bayi and other legendary athletes as the Queen's Baton Relay visited Tanzania en route to next year's Commonwealth Games. I hope we inspired some of the school children we met to become Tanzania's athletes of the future.

In Tabora, I saw how the UK is supporting newly naturalised citizens and their host communities to build better lives. This is part of the UK's wider commitment to support the refugee population here.

In Mwanza, I visited the National Institute for Medical Research which is conducting world class research on HIV/AIDS, in partnership with the London School of Hygiene & Tropical medicine.

And in Mufindi, I was proud to celebrate the contribution of the many British nationals living and working in Tanzania.

On behalf of Her Majesty the Queen, I presented one of our community, Geoff

Fox, with the Member of the British Empire (or MBE) medal.

This honour was in recognition of his substantial charitable work for the local community. It was inspiring to witness Geoff's passion and drive to change lives for the better.

And I know there are many other British Nationals doing similar work around the country.

I've also been inspired to see the drive and ambition of young Tanzanians throughout the country.

I'm delighted that we are joined tonight by members of the Department for International Development's (DFID) Youth Advisory Panel.

They work with us to ensure that UK development programmes meet the needs of their generation.

And as I've travelled round the country, I have seen for myself how British companies are creating jobs, incomes and livelihoods here.

Their innovation and entrepreneurship is not only contributing to Tanzania's industrialisation but is also providing essential services to ordinary Tanzanians.

I'm keen to encourage more British companies to invest here. So we will continue to support the Government to tackle corruption and create a level playing field. And we will continue to help the Government put in place the infrastructure, the skills and the predictable policy environment needed to attract investment.

So today is a celebration of Her Majesty's Birthday, and also of the strength of the UK-Tanzania partnership.

And this is our chance to say thank you to all of you – our friends in Government, in business and in development – who make that partnership a reality.

This relationship, I hope, will be further strengthened in the months and years to come.

You may have wondered as you came in why we are flying the Commonwealth flag.

Well, next spring, Her Majesty will host the Commonwealth Summit at Buckingham Palace & Windsor Castle in the UK.

Leaders from 52 countries will reaffirm their commitment to working together to solve global challenges, through this unique and precious grouping of friends and allies.

The Summit will focus on improving trade flows, tackling shared security threats and building resilience in the face of climate change.

I know that these are all priority issues for His Excellency President



Magufuli and I very much hope he will be able to join Her Majesty at the Summit.

Finally, I would like to take a moment to thank our sponsors, without whom this event would not have been possible.

Thank you to CMC Automobiles for exhibiting the Best of British here tonight, with 2 vehicles.

We have the Jaguar F Pace and, I'm delighted to say, the first reveal in Tanzania of the All New Land Rover Discovery.

Both vehicles are made in Britain and represent the Best of British engineering.

A big thank you goes to Serengeti Breweries for providing the beer and spirits you are enjoying this evening. The beers are locally made, bringing jobs to Tanzanians.

And thank you to our other sponsors who also represent the Best of British: BG, Deloitte, Ernst & Young, Ophir Energy, Songas, Standard Chartered Bank, Unilever and Vodacom.

Thank you all for helping to make this evening a real celebration.

And for keeping us safe tonight, I'd like to thank Ultimate Security and the Tanzanian Police Force.

So in conclusion, asenteni sana kwa kunisikiliza.

And thank you all for coming.

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**Speech: "The recent work by both the United Nations and the African Union marks a new period of this partnership."**

Thank you Mr. President.

And thank you Chef de Cabinet Viotti and Ambassador Chergui for your briefings.

The title of the document signed by the Secretary-General and the African Union Chairperson on the 19th of April is appropriately named a Framework for Enhanced Partnership. We welcome the strong signal of cooperation and

coordination that this Framework brings and we support further efforts to strengthen the partnership on both sides.

Each challenge to peace and security that we face today has a unique combination of underlying factors. In Africa we have many good examples of international, regional and sub-regional organisations coming together in varied ways to tackle them.

In some instances, the United Nations is best placed to lead a response. For instance the Democratic Republic of Congo where MONUSCO has played a critical role in protecting civilians.

In others the African Union has taken the lead, critically in Somalia where for ten years AMISOM has played a vital role in degrading the threat from Al Shabaab. The bravery and sacrifice of AMISOM troops has created the security space for political progress to be made.

On other issues the sub-region has stepped up to find solutions as we saw with ECOWAS in Gambia, and as we look to IGAD to lead in South Sudan.

In some cases the solutions will evolve, as we saw in Mali and the Central African Republic where initial responses by regional and sub-regional organisations then transitioned into United Nations peacekeeping operations. In Somalia, the United Nations provides vital logistical support to an African Union operation. This flexibility in our partnership is essential to ensure the best response to crises.

In each case, and as the Council said in resolution 2320, we should consider the comparative advantage of each institution to ensure the most appropriate and effective response is deployed to resolve conflict and achieve stability.

In order to assess which solution is best for each situation, we must enhance our partnership.

This means more joint analysis, more joint planning, more joint assessments to form a common understanding of crisis and determine the optimal solution.

The recent work by both the United Nations and the African Union marks a new period of this partnership, and it's imperative we find more and better ways of working together.

The African Union's commitment to finance 25% of the African Union peace support operations budget is a welcome development and Dr. Kaberuka and his team have made significant strides in developing the roadmap to achieve this by 2020.

This work is a positive step towards greater African ownership of peace and security, and a deeper partnership with the United Nations.

We must continue to explore ways to make our joint efforts more systematic and we look forward to discussing this with the African Union Peace and Security Council during our visit to Addis Ababa in September.

We agree with the African Union report that in response to some of the most serious threats to peace and security, the deployment of African Union Peace Support Operations will be a key requirement and once again demonstrates the African Union's comparative advantage to deploy where the United Nations cannot.

We should continue to look at how the United Nations can best support these missions to combine our strengths to bring about lasting solutions and peace on the African continent. This includes further consideration of options to provide reliable and sustainable funding for operations. But we must also focus on how we conduct those operations.

So in parallel we should examine joint standards for reporting, for accountability and for protection to ensure the highest standards and most robust oversight of missions to make them as effective as possible.

These issues will require further debate, and further joint work. We look forward to engaging with you all to strengthen and develop our partnership.

Thank you.