

[News story: Top college principals to drive improvements in further education](#)

Some of the country's top college principals have been appointed to a new group which will work with underperforming colleges to help drive up standards and improve quality of teaching.

The seven National Leaders of Further Education (NLFE) will provide support to the further education sector, to help improve provision so that more people have access to high quality education and training.

All the NLFES, [confirmed today](#) by Apprenticeships and Skills Minister Anne Milton, are college leaders from good or outstanding colleges who have a strong track record of delivering improvement – both in their own colleges and in working with others.

Apprenticeships and Skills Minister Anne Milton said:

We have a number of fantastic leaders across the FE sector, who have already achieved great results. Now we want them to use their expertise and experience to help other colleges to improve.

This is an exciting new programme that will provide colleges with practical advice and support from experts within the sector, who have a proven track record of delivering results, giving learners a greater chance of gaining the skills and knowledge they need in later life.

It has also been [announced](#) that seven new members have been appointed to the Principals' Reference Group, made up of experienced principals from good or outstanding colleges, who will advise and challenge the FE Commissioner and help inform policy development affecting colleges.

Additionally, more Deputy FE Commissioners and Advisers have been selected to support the FE Commissioner in leading interventions to help struggling FE and sixth form colleges.

These high quality appointments were made following a rigorous and open recruitment process.

News story: New DBS basic check service goes live

If you need a basic disclosure check for a job in England and Wales, you should apply to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), which now provides the service for England and Wales. If you need a basic check for a job in Scotland, then you should apply to [Disclosure Scotland](#). If you want a check for personal reasons rather than work purposes, you should apply to the relevant organisation for your area – DBS if you live in England or Wales or Disclosure Scotland if you live in Scotland.

If you are an individual applying for your own basic check you will be able to use our [new online application route](#).

If you are an organisation applying for a basic check on behalf of an employee or someone else, you can use a 'Responsible Organisation' (RO) – a third party registered with DBS . A list of Responsible Organisations can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/responsible-organisations>.

It is important that you apply to the right organisation for your basic check, so that the correct Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA) rules are applied. There is a risk of legal action if incorrect ROA rules are applied and impact a recruitment decision.

If you have any questions, please contact customerservices@dbsgsi.gov.uk.

News story: Appointments to the advisory committee on business appointments

Jonathan, Susan and Richard have been appointed following an open competition run in accordance with the Commissioner for Public Appointments' Code of Practice.

The Advisory Committee on Business Appointments was established by the Prime Minister in 1975. The Committee independently advises former Ministers, the Prime Minister, First Ministers for Scotland and Wales, Foreign Secretary, Defence Secretary, and departmental Permanent Secretaries on applications referred to it, under the Government's Business Appointment Rules (the Rules).

Committee members receive an annual honorarium of £3,000. Members are also

eligible to claim any reasonable travel and subsistence expenses incurred in the course of their work.

The appointment of Jonathan Baume, Susan Liautaud and Richard Thomas was made fully in accordance with the Commissioner for Public Appointments Code of Practice. All appointees have declared no political activity within the past five years.

Additional information about the Committee and its work is available on [its website](#).

The membership of the Committee with effect from 1 February 2018 will be:

- Chair
- Baroness Angela Browning

Members:

- Sir Alex Allan
- Jonathan Baume
- Lord Michael German OBE
- Terence Jagger
- Susan Liautaud
- The Rt Hon Baroness Liddell of Coatdyke
- Richard Thomas CBE
- John Wood

Press release: Strengthened planning rules to protect music venues and their neighbours

Housing developers building new homes near music venues should be responsible for addressing noise issues in a move to protect both music venues and their neighbours, the Housing Secretary has said.

With late-night venues and community sports clubs being forced to make high cost changes following when new residents move into the area, Mr Javid has committed to working closely with the music industry to help strengthen planning policy.

The National Planning Policy Framework, which local authorities are legally bound to comply with, will now be clarified to include a specific mention of the 'Agent of Change' principle, and will be consulted on in spring.

The move means developers will be responsible for identifying and solving any sound problems, if granted permission to build, and avoid music venues,

community and sports clubs and even churches running into expensive issues as a result of complaints from new neighbours.

Housing Secretary Sajid Javid said:

Music venues play a vital role in our communities, bringing people together and contributing to the local economy and supporting the country's grass roots music culture.

I have always thought it unfair that the burden is on long-standing music venues to solve noise issues when property developers choose to build nearby.

That's why I consulted on this in February last year as part of the housing white paper. I am pleased to finally have an opportunity to right this wrong and also give more peace of mind to new residents moving into local properties.

With strong backing from the music industry including the Music Venue Trust, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has been working with John Spellar MP following his private member's bill on this subject to ensure that planning policy reflects what the industry needs.

The government consulted on a proposal to amend national planning policy to give greater emphasis to this matter as part of the housing white paper published on 7 February 2017.

The proposal was that planning policies and decisions should take account of existing businesses and other organisations, such as churches, community pubs and music venues, when locating new development nearby and, where necessary, to mitigate the impact of noise and other potential nuisances arising from existing development.

This will be incorporated into the updated National Planning Policy Framework.

[News story: Bird flu prevention zone extended to cover whole of England](#)

A bird flu prevention zone has been declared across the whole of England, Chief Veterinary Officer Nigel Gibbens has confirmed today.

This means it is a legal requirement for all bird keepers to follow strict biosecurity measures. It comes as 13 dead wild birds were confirmed to have the virus in Warwickshire.

Last week [17 wild birds tested positive in Dorset](#) and a total of 31 infected birds have now been identified at that site. Defra took swift action to put a local prevention zone in the area on Friday (12 January). However, as these latest results show the disease is not isolated to a single site the decision has been taken to extend the prevention zone across the country on a precautionary basis.

Testing of the birds found in Warwickshire is ongoing, however, it is highly expected that this will be the same H5N6 strain of the virus which has been circulating in wild birds across Europe in recent months. Public Health England have advised the risk to public health remains very low and the Food Standards Agency have said that bird flu does not pose a food safety risk for UK consumers.

Chief Veterinary Officer Nigel Gibbens said:

Following the latest finding of bird flu in wild birds in Warwickshire, we are extending our action to help prevent the virus spreading to poultry and other domestic birds.

Whether you keep just a few birds or thousands, you are now legally required to meet enhanced biosecurity requirements and this is in your interests to do, to protect your birds from this highly infectious virus.

Biosecurity measures

The prevention zone means bird keepers across the country must:

- Ensure the areas where birds are kept are unattractive to wild birds, for example by netting ponds, and by removing wild bird food sources;
- Feed and water your birds in enclosed areas to discourage wild birds;
- Minimise movement in and out of bird enclosures;
- Clean and disinfect footwear and keep areas where birds live clean and tidy;
- Reduce any existing contamination by cleansing and disinfecting concrete areas, and fencing off wet or boggy areas.

Keepers with more than 500 birds will also be required to take some extra biosecurity measures including restricting access to non-essential people, changing clothing and footwear before entering bird enclosures and cleaning and disinfecting vehicles.

The prevention zone will be in place until further notice and will be kept under regular review as part of our work to monitor the threat of bird flu.

Poultry keepers and members of the public should report dead wild birds to the Defra helpline on 03459 33 55 77 and keepers should report suspicion of disease to APHA on 03000 200 301. Keepers should familiarise themselves with our [avian flu advice](#).

There are no plans to carry out any culls or put movement restrictions in place.

Background

- Trade should not be affected following the findings in wild birds, according to the rules of the World Animal Health Organisation (OIE).
- The risk to poultry and other captive birds depends, amongst other things, on the level of biosecurity on the premises and the likely contact between kept birds and wild birds, which is why it is now mandatory that all keepers ensure they practice the highest standards of biosecurity.
- [Keep up to date with the latest avian influenza situation](#)
- There are currently no findings of bird flu in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland and the prevention zone is for England only