

Thu 12/10/2023 08:32

Dear Colleagues,

The Advanced British Standard

Much was made of the PM's announcement regarding an overhaul of A levels and more maths. The need for better maths skills was then amply demonstrated by the Department for Education who hit the headlines for getting the School Funding Allocations wrong by £370m. The [plan has been published](#) but makes clear it is a long term project with a white paper to be published next year. In the meantime, A levels and T levels will remain in place and new T levels will continue to roll out.

So before deciding whether to spend time ploughing through the document or to leave that for the Policy Officer, it's worth remembering that a week is a long time in politics. A year with an election in it is a very long time indeed.

Improving access for young adult learners in botany natural history courses

Field Studies Council Biodiversity has secured £40,000 of funding from The Foyle Foundation to help our biodiversity training courses become more accessible. Responding to the needs expressed by learners, the focus will be on botanical courses as the building blocks for habitat assessments. These are in high demand from the sector and include understanding woodland indicator species and identifying broadleaf trees. Both are crucial skills in assessing Biodiversity Net Gain, which is expected to be a key part of the developing green economy

Our courses remain open to everyone but we have worked on removing barriers for young adult learners who are neurodiverse and/or dyslexic. We reviewed our courses with the National Autism Society and this grant will progress work on creating and integrating visual learning aids such as infographics, imagery, photographs and video content into the often text heavy online courses.

The project will directly support over 2,500 people. In addition, we will be offering up to 200 subsidies to dyslexic and neurodiverse young adult learners. It will run from 1st November 2023 for 12 months.

Coming up: our regular Staff Pulse Survey

All staff will shortly receive the bi-annual Staff Pulse Survey in your email boxes from a member of the HR team. The survey is very short and should take less than one minute to complete. It will run from 16 October to midnight on 23 October. I encourage everyone to take part. New members of staff might like to know that the Pulse Survey is carried out twice a year and it's in addition to the Investors in People Survey that many have recently completed.

As with any pulse reading, it's a snapshot that allows us to calculate our Net Promotor Score, but also allows us to track changes over time. It's deliberately different to the IIP Survey but taken together the results from both are useful and insightful.

Special Mention

I recently received a flurry of Special Mentions, which is a good thing, so I am sorry that this one got delayed. Congratulations to Gem Simmons who has been nominated by her colleagues at Rhyd-y-creuau. Seasonal tutor Gem has received the prestigious 'Tim Bain Memorial Award' from British Divers Marine Life Rescue. She is passionate about marine mammals and is the British Divers Marine Life Rescue coordinator for North Wales. She puts a lot of her free time into rescuing marine mammals and you can [read more about Gem and her award here](#).

Philip Turvil, Eco Business Director

As some of you may know, Philip will be leaving us, but not until the end of the year. I'll do a proper thank you to Philip and say a little more about future plans nearer the time.

Welcome to Field Studies Council

Heather Dallow joins Juniper Hall as a Casual Hospitality and Catering Assistant

Mark