

FETN Quarterly Newsletter

May 2025

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the FETN Newsletter! In this first quarterly edition, we introduce a fresh communication mechanism designed to bring you the latest insights into the Further Education landscape. Each edition will include:

- **Sector Updates in Practice:** Key news and trends shaping the sector and how these relate to our members, the work you all do and suggest ways to embed new ideas into current practice
- **Members News:** Success stories and innovative practices from our members community
- **FETN Updates:** Organisational developments, upcoming events and ways members can stay connected
- **Spotlight on:** In-depth features on real-world learning opportunities that bridge theory and practice
- **Hot Topic:** Focused discussions on pressing themes to keep students safe and well-informed
- **In Our Next Edition:** A section of the newsletter dedicated to the topics that are up and coming, and ways to interact and be involved directly in the content

We're excited to embark on this journey with you and look forward to sharing best practices and cutting-edge ideas that empower educational leaders, take some of the graft out of the day job, while inspiring our students to achieve and succeed, beyond our short time with them.

Sector Updates in Practice

Reimagining Tutorial with the New Ofsted Framework

The FE landscape is abuzz with discussions over the proposed Ofsted scorecard and accompanying framework changes. At the heart of these proposals is a shift toward a comprehensive evaluation of student support and progress, with a keen focus on ‘inclusion with real outcomes’ —elevating the role, focus and approach of group tutorials and personal tutoring.

- **Integrated Student Support:** The framework expects institutions to offer a holistic view, tracking and support of progress. Group tutorials and personal tutoring sessions (1:1s) are going to need to evolve further, from contact and support sessions to essential components that foster both academic and personal growth
- **Evolving the Role of the Personal Tutor:** Personal tutors will need to broaden their scope, integrating insights gained through group sessions and with colleges from cross-college, to create a more responsive approach to removing barriers to success and other student challenges. This dual strategy fortifies the student support system and highlights the need to ‘get the wiring right’
- **Data-Driven Performance - increased focus on disadvantage:** Institutions will already be collecting comprehensive data on attendance, engagement, and qualitative outcomes from group tutorials and other activities a student undertakes beyond the academic input, specifically for those students who are identified as vulnerable and/or disadvantaged in some way. The ability to use a robust evidence base will be tested, encouraging the sector to ensure continuous improvement throughout the learning process, having a clear understanding of their own demography, ensuring any further disadvantage is minimised
- **Preparing for Change:** Many FE establishments are proactively adjusting tutorial approaches and enhancing tutor training to meet the new standards, ensuring they are ready for the upcoming changes.

*FETN has a sector unique training and recognition system called **Professional Tutor Recognition** for practitioners (designed for colleagues who are new to tutoring and/or do this in addition to another role), advanced practitioners (recognising specialists in tutoring and is ideal for those who want to fine tune their craft and provide peer support) and leaders (which recognises leaders who have a focus and give priority to all things tutorial). More information about how you and colleagues can achieve these recognitions can be found [HERE](#)*

Enhancing Non-Academic Skills Through Combined Tutorial

There is a growing emphasis on nurturing non-academic skills alongside traditional academic learning - an increasing number of colleges, specifically with the introduction of T-Levels and their focus on ensuring students are 'placement-ready', are developing their models to a more combined approach, utilising the commonly underutilised study programme flexibilities. This approach is now being used specifically to:

- **Foster Communication and Teamwork:** Interactive sessions give students the chance to hone effective communication, engage in collaborative problem-solving, and build essential teamwork skills, relating these directly to the sector or subject choice of their programme of study
- **Build Digital Literacy and Financial Resilience:** By integrating learning on online safety, budgeting, and ethical digital practices into sessions, institutions prepare students for the modern world beyond academia and ensure they are a 'rounded employee'
- **Support Mental Health and Wellbeing:** Institutions are increasingly embedding mental health awareness into academic and non-academic sessions, using peer-led discussions, peer tutoring, and reflective practices to cultivate resilience, empathy, and self-awareness (three key skills that employers report are lacking in their new recruits)

FETN's QSAs are specifically designed to investigate a college's approach to tutorial to ensure the highest levels of impact, providing best practice advice and support along the way - more information can be found [HERE](#)

Innovations in Personal Tutoring to Foster Holistic Development

Personal tutoring (1:1) is embarking on an era of blended support:

- **Blended Learning Models:** Tutors are combining face-to-face meetings with digital check-ins, ensuring continuous dialogue that addresses both academic and personal development
- **Training in Socio-Emotional Skills:** Professional development is focusing on training colleagues specifically in empathy, self-reflection, and holistic goal-setting—empowering tutors to support students' overall wellbeing

- **Peer Mentoring and Collaborative Networks:** These initiatives encourage peer mentoring schemes that work alongside personal tutoring, nurturing a network of shared experiences and mutual support

In addition to the Professional Tutor Recognition system, FETN has a well established package of training courses for colleges focusing on best practice approaches for 1:1 with learners. All training provided is prefixed with a scoping meeting to ensure context is understood and provides the trainers with an understanding of pitch and any particular focus that is needed - contact us on info@fetn.org.uk to set up a training scoping meeting

Member News

Celebrating Collaborative Excellence

Our members continue to shine through innovative practices that are setting high benchmarks across our community. As this is the first edition we are providing an overview of the best practice seen up and down the country over the last few months, find out how to contact us to provide a case study/contribute to future editions with your success stories:

- **Innovative Initiatives:** Members are successfully integrating digital monitoring tools into their group tutorials, capturing valuable insights that enhance tailored interventions
- **Workshops and Webinars:** Recent engaging sessions have laid the groundwork for multi-institutional collaborations, sharing best practices around both academic and non-academic support strategies
- **Shared Success Stories:** Colleges are increasingly investing their time to establish alumni networks, utilising these past students to be a key focus at induction, mid-year and as part of end-of-year celebrations, affirming the need for tutorial to be at the epicentre of curriculum and the student experience

Your innovative efforts and shared experiences are the heartbeat of our community and inspire us all to continue pushing the boundaries of excellence in education.

FETN Updates

A Word from Sally our Founding Director

As FETN continues to grow in both reputation and numbers I am delighted to announce that Lee Barrett joins us as Senior Associate. Lee has worked in FE for a number of years where his roles have included Assistant Principal, Head of Personal and Social Development; Director of Quality; Head of Teaching, Learning and Assessment, Advanced Practitioner and Head of Curriculum. Prior to his work in FE, his roles have included Executive Director of Education, Quality and Inclusion at a national charity, LGBTQ+ Youth Worker for the Terrence Higgins Trust and as a Registered Nurse. Lee's wealth of experience and irrepressible enthusiasm for all things tutorial and personal tutoring will serve to enhance the FETN offer going forward. In the first instance Lee will take on responsibility for the new FETN Newsletter and work alongside me to extend our training and development offer. Please feel free to contact either myself or Lee for ideas for the network that you would like us to take forward in the future.

Driving the Conversation Forward

At FETN, our commitment is to empower educational change-makers. Here's what's new on our end:

- **Upcoming Events:** Look out for further details relating to our annual conference featuring industry experts and seasoned educators discussing the latest updates and sharing their expertise. As always special breakout sessions will focus this year on best practices in group tutorials, innovation in personal tutoring, enabling work experience/industry placement as the evidence base for employability skill development, and digital safety - in addition we are going to be providing bespoke online training sessions at a discounted rate to members on areas for improvement, the first one being how the new Ofsted framework (once finalised) will impact, providing practical solutions to get ahead of the game....
- **Guidance Documents:** We are updating our suite of guidance documents and case studies to help institutions align with the latest changes in the sector. Expect actionable strategies and data-driven insights, available soon
- **Resource Development:** Your regional reps will be making contact with you soon about collaboratively refreshing the FETN 'Resource Bank', these valuable resources are used with both groups and individuals and can support leaders and managers to make impactful change without the need for drawn out processes

- **Enhanced Engagement:** We are currently sourcing a new online forum at FETN.org.uk, providing a dedicated space for members to exchange ideas, share success stories, and collaborate on innovative solutions without the need to wait for email responses
- **Feedback and Collaboration:** We highly value your input immensely. For members, or those who are thinking about joining the organisation we will shortly be sending out a link to our Annual Feedback Survey. The results will be shared by our Regional Reps and will help guide us in tailoring our membership offer and services to directly support you.

Hot Topic

Digital Safety and Cyberbullying Prevention

In today's digital era, ensuring the safety of our students goes far beyond physical premises.

- **Empowering Digital Literacy:** FE institutions are increasingly embedding sessions into group tutorials that cover online privacy, secure social media practices, and responsible digital citizenship - providing a concise e-learning package to a student at induction on this topic is not having the impact needed, clearly demonstrated by the increase in cyber related Safeguarding and Prevent cases
- **Addressing Cyberbullying:** In the best cases both personal tutorial sessions (1:1s) and group sessions include focused discussions on recognising, reporting, and preventing cyberbullying, providing students with clear protocols and support mechanisms
- **Creating a Safe Online Environment:** Best practices for password management, recognising phishing, and understanding digital footprints are being taught to empower students to protect themselves in the digital realm - but this cannot be a one off, repetitive reminders are key
- **Collaborative Initiatives:** In a few colleges we have seen partnerships with cybersecurity experts resulting in practical workshops and training sessions, helping both educators and students stay ahead of emerging digital threats

These hot topics are vital in equipping our students with the knowledge and skills needed to navigate the complex digital world safely and confidently. If you have any comments or thoughts about these, or any others you feel are 'hot right now', drop us a line to discuss.

In The Next Edition

Our next edition will be in July and will we look forward to exploring a range of fresh topics, including:

- **Spotlight on: Employer/Stakeholder Engagement: A Shift to Integration and Involvement** Discover how forging stronger links with employers and stakeholders drives practical learning and expands career pathways
- **Innovations in Adaptive Learning Technologies:** How cutting-edge technologies are transforming student engagement and the delivery of both academic and non-academic support
- **Enhancing Mentorship Practices:** Best practices for personal tutoring and structured mentoring that prepare students for the multifaceted challenges of modern education and work
- **Innovation at Student Induction:** Ensuring the starting points are right for both new and progressing students is key to ensure they feel welcomed, included, and motivated to start their next steps in a positive and productive way - we'll share best practice approaches that move away from traditional ice breakers and reading the rule book

We're excited about the conversation these topics will ignite and warmly invite you to contribute your thoughts and experiences. Email our editor directly with any suggestions, feedback, thoughts, and contributions!

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