

27 July 2010

The Editor
The Independent
2 Derry Street
London
W8 5HF

Dear Sir

Inaccurate reporting about the Institute for Learning (IfL)

As the new government seeks to reduce this country's financial deficit, it is hardly surprising to see a plethora of news articles and features focusing on large-scale structural and funding changes ahead. In these uncertain times, however, it is less than helpful to read inaccurate reporting in the media about the imminent demise of several quangos. It was disappointing to see your own newspaper joining the fray with an article containing a number of mistakes (The Independent, Tuesday 27 July 2010. *One by one, the quangos are abolished. But at what cost?*)

I will not attempt to address the inaccuracies relating to organisations other than the Institute for Learning (IfL), which your article incorrectly classifies as a business and economy quango that is to be abolished. Allow me to set the record straight.

IfL is the independent professional body for teachers and trainers throughout the further education and skills sector. It was set up in 2002 by teachers, in partnership with unions and employer bodies. As a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee and led by its members, it is governed solely by its Advisory Council and cannot be closed by the government or others. IfL is not a quango.

Since 2007, the government has paid most IfL membership fees, as a commitment to the profession and to help IfL become established quickly and cost-effectively. IfL is, however, moving towards being self-funded by 2013, and this puts it in a strong and sustainable position as the independent professional body for teachers and trainers in FE and skills, on a par with other highly respected and longstanding professional bodies, such as those for accountants, nurses, doctors and lawyers.

Our teachers and trainers have a critical role to play in helping upskill and reskill the nation's workforce, to help secure the economic recovery. Their ability to deliver high-quality teaching and training to young people and adults is dependent upon them continuing to get support from leaders in the sector for their front-line role with learners and employers. IfL is determined to ensure that teachers and trainers get the professional development they need; the recognition they deserve; and the chance for their valuable views about teaching and learning that makes a difference to be heard.

The thousands of dedicated teachers and trainers throughout our sector who are doing a wonderful job – in spite of incredible financial constraints and time pressures – deserve better than the inaccurate reporting we have seen in recent days.

Yours faithfully

Lee Davies
Deputy Chief Executive