

## IfL sets out vision for self-funding at annual general meeting

IfL held its eighth annual general meeting in London on Tuesday 12 October 2010. The elected Advisory Council of IfL, the professional body, voted to receive and approve the [directors' report](#) and the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2010, re-appoint UHY Hacker Young as auditors and authorise the non-executive board to fix their remuneration.

Sue Crowley, the chair of IfL's Advisory Council, confirmed that the transition from the old governance structure to the new had been achieved successfully, and that the new non-executive board and Advisory Council were working effectively, efficiently and with real commitment. The non-executive board had endorsed a decision by the previous Council to apply for charitable status, and the application was being processed. It had also agreed to pursue an application for chartered status, which if conferred would greatly enhance the status of IfL as a professional body and its membership of teachers and trainers.

Turning to the issue of self-funding, Ms Crowley said, "The most profound external impact on IfL this past year was the government's intention, as revealed in its *Skills for Growth* white paper, for IfL to become self-financing within three years.

"I feel that the news about self-financing is mixed. We recognise the challenges posed by the additional cost to our members at a time of financial constraints, and the possibility that uncertainty about introducing payment could affect membership numbers, which could undermine the powerful collective voice of teachers and trainers. This is tempered by the good news aspect, in that IfL will retain and develop our ability as an independent professional body to support our members in becoming the best they can be and ensuring that further education and skills practitioners, our members, are recognised and acknowledged for their excellent teaching and training of learners. Members paying the fee, or their employers choosing to pay it for them, is standard practice for well-regarded professional bodies and will underline IfL's independence as a professional body 'led by members for members'.

"Continuing professional development (CPD) is a hallmark of being a professional, and confirming CPD is the norm among professional bodies. It is good to see that the number of members declaring their CPD is higher this year than last. Some 105,000 members have chosen to use REfLECT, the online personal learning space that IfL provides as a benefit for members to record, reflect on and share their CPD. We have about 700 IfL Volunteer Connections working across the sector to support other IfL members, especially with CPD and using REfLECT. We are seeing much activity through social networks, including blogs, Twitter and new online communities, and we get extremely good responses to calls for consultations. All of this shows that teachers and trainers are hungry for interaction, driving their own learning and development as well as a commitment to professionalism."

Acknowledging the challenges facing IfL as it moves toward self-financing, Toni Fazaeli, IfL's chief executive, said that the executive team was determined that IfL would succeed in becoming ever more valued by members and by the further education and skills sector. "The concept of teachers and trainers having their own professional body is relatively new for many of our members \* certainly compared with the hundreds of years that lawyers have had theirs, and decades that nurses, midwives, childminders, accountants and others have had their professional bodies.

"Moving to the position where all members start paying fees instead of the government will be challenging at a time when there will be major reductions in public spending on further education and skills, and all public services; when there are likely to be salary freezes or very small rises; and where public sector pensions may require individuals to pay an increased contribution. Some, or even many, IfL members may lose their employment in teaching or training, or face reduced hours.

"IfL has undoubted strengths and a powerful vision and huge dedication to being the professional body that supports teachers and trainers in sustaining or striving towards excellent practice, in hard times as well as good. We will do all we can to work smarter and cost-effectively to support members - by providing benefits that support excellence in teaching and training, by helping raise the status of teachers and trainers and by giving members an influential voice to affect policy. We will continue to demonstrate the positive difference that IfL members make for their learners, for their college or provider, and for the nation."