

The background of the entire page is a photograph of two young women. The woman on the left has long blonde hair and is wearing a black sweater, smiling broadly with her right arm raised. The woman on the right has dark hair, wears glasses and a grey sweater, and is also smiling with her right arm raised. They appear to be in a celebratory or enthusiastic mood. A white rectangular frame is superimposed over the center of the image, containing the main title text.

# QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE ANNUAL REVIEW

For the Academic Year 2023/2024  
(NCG Self-Assessment Report)



# CONTENTS

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## Self Assessment Report

Executive Summary - Position Statement 2023/24	3
NCG's Headline Strengths	4
College Highlights and Areas for Continuous Improvement	5
Corporation Board Lines of Enquiry for the 2024/25 academic year	6
Quality of Education - Curriculum Overview	8
Intent & Contribution to Local Skills	10
Quality of education - Implementation, Teaching and Learning	11
Quality of Education - Impact/Outcomes	12
Master Target File - Scorecard and SAR Judgements Grades	13

## College Summaries

Carlisle College	16
Kidderminster College	18
Lewisham College	20
Newcastle College	22
Newcastle Sixth Form College	24
Southwark College	26
West Lancashire College	28
HE Position Statement	30
Initial Teacher Education Summary	32

## Annex

About NCG	35
Legal Status and Delivery Regions	36
Headcount Data (funded learners)	37
Key Data and Outcomes	39
Provision Type Position Papers	51
Glossary	58

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: POSITION STATEMENT - OCTOBER 2024

NCG's mission to 'enable social mobility and economic prosperity through exceptional education' is well embedded and understood across the Group, by staff who are deeply committed to this strategic intent. The position statement below sets out a number of headline strengths that support this statement, alongside a number of themes for continuous improvement, in further pursuit of the Group's mission.

- The curriculum at NCG is both expansive, and responsive, to regional and national skills needs. Governors and leaders have taken decisive steps in 2023/24 to refresh the Corporation and college boards with committed stakeholders, to further strengthen NCG's national, and local, place-based accountability. NCG is perfectly positioned to effectively contribute to the delivery of the UK Government's Five Strategic Missions.
  - Governors, leaders, and managers work collaboratively in the pursuit of continuous improvement. Leaders and managers provide clear guidance and direction to staff through a consistent policy framework, and values set. Staff have a range of opportunities for college and NCG-based peer review and communities of practice in pursuit of consistent, high quality delivery.
  - NCG has a strong commitment to the development of leadership at all levels. This includes senior leader participation in ETF training, aspiring middle leader engagement with NCG's Leadership Hub, and a novel student leadership programme. As a result there is now a growing record of successful internal and external promotion and progression.
  - Typical standards of teaching and learning are evaluated to be secure. The vast majority of staff successfully teach new knowledge and skills to NCG's learners. There are occasional examples of excellence in all colleges, although this is not yet systemic. The introduction of a collaboratively agreed set of professional standards, derived from national DfE, ETF, and UKPSF standards will aim to bring about even more consistency in the evaluation, and professional development of NCG's teachers and educators in 2024/25.
  - In year surveys indicate that learners and apprentices feel supported by the staff of NCG's colleges; aggregated scores indicate high levels of agreement that NCG is a 'good college', and responses associated with resources are improving as a result of significant capital investment.
  - The behaviour and attitudes of learners at NCG's colleges is very good; learners and apprentices are respectful to staff and their peers, and they work diligently in pursuit of their academic and training goals. A minority of learners do not yet attend regularly enough, and leaders are taking conscientious actions to raise relevant levels of attendance; especially in maths and English, and a scattering of tutorial sessions. This effort has not yet translated into the attainment of target achievement rates.
  - Outcomes for learners in all age groups are marginally above national averages. There remains pockets of inconsistency and variation, which is attributed to a specific mix of socio-demographics, provision level and type, and in some cases curriculum reform. Learner sustained destinations remain strong at 93%.
  - Improvement actions associated with apprenticeships are now yielding results. Action has included a consolidated sector footprint built on specialisms, and knowledge transfer for leaders and trainers. Outcomes and financial contributions are rising, and achievement is now securely above a relatively low national rate. NCG leaders believe this provision is now Good.
- NCG has a number of key improvement themes this year, which have been updated from the previous SAR following in-year evaluations and actions to date.**
- To be ambitious for outstanding and in doing so bring about continuous improvement through the introduction of a new Quality Plan.
  - To continue to pursue People Plan actions intended to address the sector-wide issues of staff retention and recruitment, whilst also bringing consistency to job roles and titles.
  - To work to further reduce the residual variation in attendance rates through course leadership standards, a focus on learner centred timetabling, course management, and pastoral intervention. To work with high calibre employers to expand NCG's apprenticeship offer, whilst concurrently shoring up retention
  - To introduce a new examination specification for GCSE English, and pilot a new specification for GCSE maths. The NCG Curriculum Council will continue to review the efficacy of delivery models
  - To pursue the NCG Guarantee standards and in doing so, seek to ensure that all full time learners at NCG benefit from work readiness training, social action, skills competitions, mental fitness support, and digital skills.



# HEADLINE STRENGTHS

A summary of NCG's relative strengths is gathered from college self-assessment, evaluations obtained from qualitative sources throughout the year, outcome-based achievement and progress measures, in addition to the views of staff, learners and employers.

The strengths are summarised as:

- Governors and leaders have a strategic plan to deliver exceptional learner experience and outcomes built on high quality local college delivery, supported by a national infrastructure.
- The Group has an extensive curriculum offer, intrinsically aligned to national and regional skills needs, learners' aspiration and community learning. This is supported by a number of industry-standard resources for learners, many in high value sectors of genuine expertise such as digital, healthcare, high value energy engineering, aircraft engineering and aviation, rail, construction, and the service and creative sectors. NCG's curriculum extends from Entry Level to Level 7, and has unique indefinite awarding powers for higher education.
- NCG's Leadership Hub continues to provide an opportunity for new and aspiring leaders, to access training to facilitate their career progression. Over 200 staff have now passed through

the programme, with many being able to demonstrate internal and external promotions.

Governors, leaders and managers know their provision well, and take meaningful actions to bring about improvement. This is evident in the robustness of self assessment, in conscientious quality improvement planning, and in the drive to improve delivery standards through the newly introduced Quality Plan.

- The Group's extensive resource of teaching and professional support staff provides huge opportunities for the sharing of knowledge and best practice for the benefit of learners. Communities of practice for quality and TLA, safeguarding, apprenticeships, care experienced students (CES), learning support administration, T Levels, and digital learning are now well established; and have continued to help develop cross-Group collaboration associated with continuous improvement.
- Approaches to the development of teaching, learning and assessment, have resulted in stable experiences,

outcomes, and destinations for learners. Learners are evaluated to make good progress from their starting points as evaluated in focused curriculum reviews and thematic deep dives. Just about all remaining attainment gaps are closing, outside of GCSE English and maths aims.

- The behaviour and attitudes of learners is frequently observed to be very good; learners report that they feel safe and supported in all of NCG's colleges.
- The use of skills competitions is a source of emerging pride at NCG, to help develop inter-personal skills, in addition to the consolidation and testing of new knowledge and skills under competitive pressures. There is an emerging strength associated with learner engagement, through the 'student change-makers' project, in association with Unloc. Additionally sessions delivered by specialist provider Loudspeaker, as part of the NCG Guarantee, is helping to support tutorial content and build confidence and resilience.



# COLLEGE HIGHLIGHTS & AREAS FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The governors and leaders of NCG's colleges believe that the Quality of Education is good, and for the first time since 2017, all provision types are now evaluated to be secure, following demonstrable improvements within NCG's apprenticeship offering. Leaders at Lewisham College now believe that outcomes and standards for young people are 'good' clearing the remaining require further improvement, from last year. A number of specific strengths and areas for further development are highlighted below.

- Very good sustained destination rates have been maintained at Carlisle College, and learners on L3 Diploma courses are now achieving at a very high rate. Partnership work with local employers and stakeholders are evaluated to be effective.
- Staff and students at Kidderminster College make a good contribution to local skills, evident at all levels of the curriculum. The College has a strong commitment to personal development and skills, opening a new centre for construction and green technologies in October 2024.
- Lewisham College is making very positive strides in the percentage of sustained positive learner destinations, including short employability courses for Transport for London. ESOL and supported learning programmes for young people have good outcomes.
- The leaders of Newcastle College continue to operate a large and stable provision for the benefit of learners. Standards and outcomes continue to improve, and the designation of indefinite degree awarding powers is a genuine differentiator in the FE and Skills sector. The College's apprenticeship provision, the largest in the Group is now 'good', the provision for learners with high needs, and for adults is strong.
- Leaders at Newcastle Sixth Form have successfully worked with teachers and students to improve the progress outcomes (ALPS), whilst learner progression to university, including disadvantaged groups, is very strong.
- Leaders at Southwark College have continued to align their curriculum offer to the needs of the local community and its stakeholders. As a result destinations are secure for young people and adults seeking employment. College leaders now believe the adult provision is strong.
- NCG governors and leaders have successfully intervened to support the sustainability of West Lancashire College. As a result learner recruitment levels are improving. Whilst delivery standards have remained stable, there are some challenges with variation in the 2023/24 outcomes due to contextual factors.

## **All NCG colleges have a discrete number of key improvement themes this year.**

- All Colleges will be required to embed the new quality standards into ETLA and focused review work. In doing so, will aim to further improve the consistency of high quality delivery and course leadership and aim to become 'ambitious for outstanding'.
- Curriculum and pastoral staff will be charged to expedite the embedding of the NCG Guarantee as a key campaign to prepare NCG's learners for life and work in times of rapidly evolving political, social and technological change.
- NCG leaders will revisit the Group-wide philosophy and model associated with the successful delivery of English and maths, with the aim of securing better outcomes for our young people. Especially given the challenges with high grades in several



colleges, and the relatively low starting points, on average, of many NCG learners.

- The leadership team at Newcastle Sixth Form College will continue to restore the excellent ALPS rates observed prior to the pandemic, by concentrating on the development of key teaching standards, and reducing the residual outcome variation between subjects.
- Leaders, managers, and educators will continue to secure recent improvements in the delivery and compliance of apprenticeships, whilst working with partner employers to expand the volume of apprentices.
- Leaders will continue to reach for excellence in the provision of High Needs, through the agreed NCG standards. Leaders at Newcastle College will continue to improve their adult provision to reach excellence.

# CORPORATION BOARD LINES OF CHALLENGE & SUPPORT 2024/25

The Corporation Board lines of challenge and support are intended to bridge the 2023/24 SAR themes for continuous improvement, by reporting progress in the 2024/25 academic year. These 'lines' will form the foundation of discussion, challenge, and support in the newly formed Quality & Standards sub-committee.

- How successful are leadership actions to implement the NCG Quality Plan standards? How successfully are College Boards monitoring this work, whilst developing their rigorous oversight of NCG's quality and performance?
- What measures indicate that leadership action to reduce the variation in attendance and retention rates is having impact?
- How consistently is the NCG Guarantee being implemented across NCG? What indicators provide assurance that all in-scope learners benefit from this programme of personal development?
- How successfully is the new specification for GCSE English being implemented, alongside the pilot of a new specification in maths (at Southwark College)? What does the evaluation of TLA in maths & English tell us about the quality of education in these programmes?
- What areas of the apprenticeship provision is being targeted for growth. How successfully is this being achieved without impacting on recent quality improvements?
- What in-year information indicates that NCG staff are working to close attainment gaps, particularly in English and maths based on deprivation; in addition to the progress of care experienced learners, and those few ethnicity groups that track below the NCG average?
- To what extent is the new investment in resilience technology preparing staff and learners for the implementation of the Protection of Premises Act should it gain Royal Assent in 2025? (Martyr's Law)
- To what extent are leaders using technology such as AI for innovation in curriculum delivery, and to develop lean processes, and reduce staff workload. What benefits is this technology bringing?
- How are leaders working to bring more consistency to the planning, delivery, and recording of work experience across the Group?

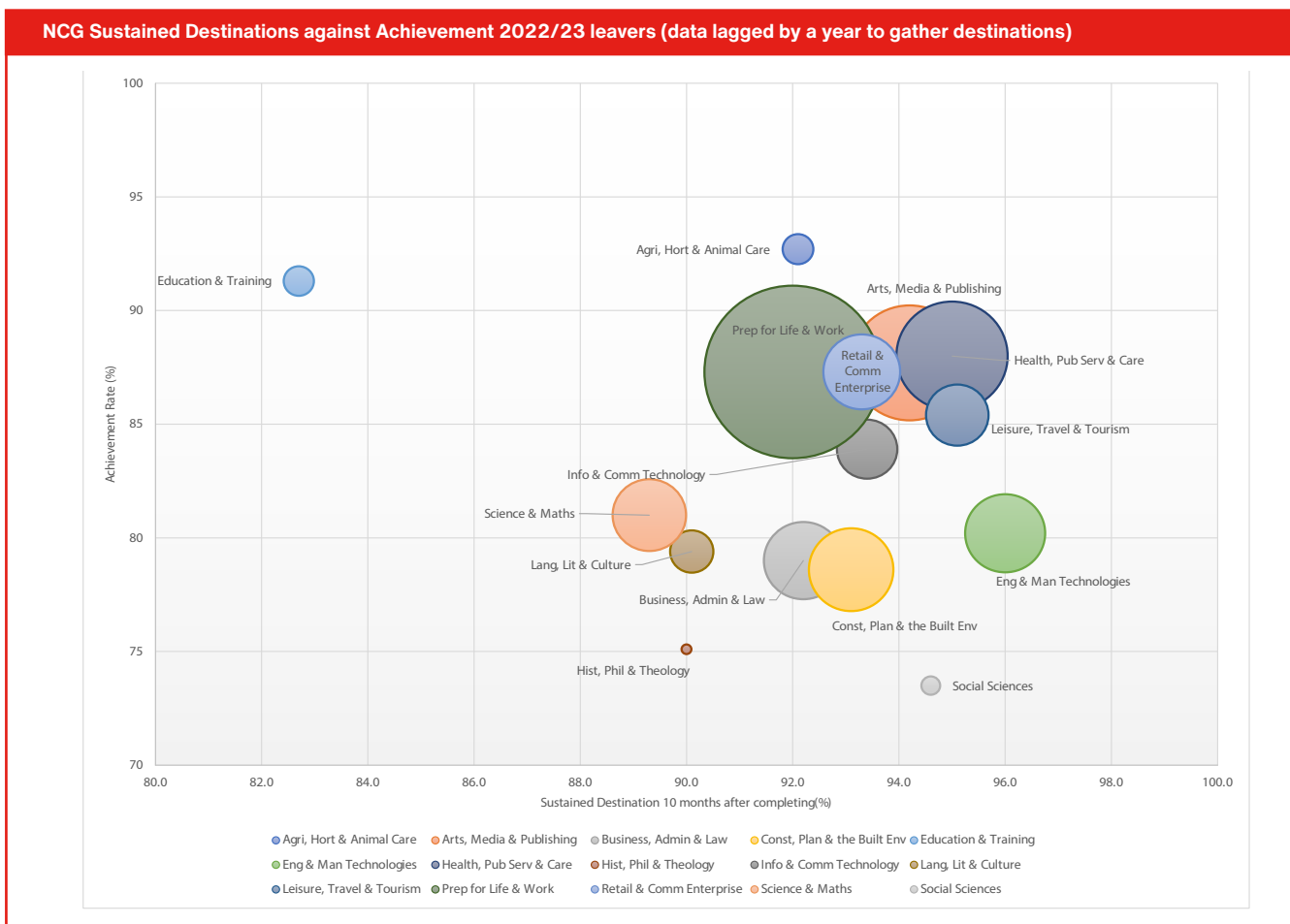






# QUALITY OF EDUCATION – CURRICULUM OVERVIEW 2023/24

NCG’s curriculum (by subject sector) is illustrated below. The chart indicates four variables: achievement (vertical axis), sustained destinations (horizontal axis), subject sector name (legend/key), and relative volume of learners (represented by the size of the bubble). The successful areas would therefore be shown toward the top right of the chart. As the destinations are gathered 9months+ of the learners leaving the course/programme, the data in this chart is always lagged by a year.



NCG’s curriculum has developed over several years, and is a product of learner choice, local demand, existing specialisms, and a function of other successful provision in the localities served by the colleges.

The Group's curriculum strategy is articulated through accountability statements, that are aligned to the NCG mission, alongside local, regional and national skills priorities. College boards have a key role in

assuring this alignment on behalf of their communities, and employer needs.

The annual curriculum cycle is administrated via an FE Academic Board, supported by a number of staff councils (curriculum, apprenticeships, ITE, safeguarding). This encourages the participation of internal stakeholders, and is a superb opportunity for knowledge share.

An annual cycle of continuous improvement is aligned to key quality milestones and review meetings (QCPR). An executive-level performance review, and issue resolution meeting (Confirm & Challenge) was introduced in 2023/24.

In terms of education and training (16-18 and adults excluding HE and apprenticeships). The Group's enrolment increased by around 8000

aims in the last year - mainly due to growth in awards, certificates, and non-reg provision. The largest subject skills sector (SSA) within NCG is the sector of preparation of life and work - this is a broad SSA that accounts for around 50% of NCG's classroom education alone. The sector includes English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), basic English and maths (Functional Skills) and short aims for adults seeking employment. The SSA tends to be the largest in most GFE colleges.

GCSE English and maths remains just over 10% of the 2023/24 enrolment, despite growth of nearly 900 enrolments. The remaining 40% of NCG provision is vocational, applied, and academic provision in health, business, arts & creative, service and retail, ICT and digital, construction, engineering, sport and a number of popular A Levels.

NCG had around 2000 apprentices in training in 2023/24 - a decline on the previous year as a consequence of subject consolidation and curriculum realignment to more technical standards, in-line with local need.

2023/24 was the first year of offering T Levels - a first year evaluation summary is contained in the annex of this document. Newcastle College host the vast majority of NCG's HE provision, which is not only a source of excellent delivery, the capital investment often benefits FES learners too. The Group had over 3300 HE students in 2023/24 - a summary is included in the annex.

- Carlisle College is aligned to the needs of the local area and Cumbria LEP. The curriculum reflects a local economy that requires skills in construction, health, engineering, IT, and the visitor economy. There remains an appetite from learners to undertake design, creative, and performance-provision at the College. The apprenticeship offer is streamlined around the demonstrable needs of

the region, and includes a footprint in construction, engineering and business.

- Kidderminster College operates as a locally responsive college offering a range of courses in the LSIP-aligned construction, health, creative industries, business and engineering sectors of automotive and electrical installation. A dedicated new facility for construction, auto, and green technology will open in September 2024, in response to local demand. A long standing partnership, with West Midland Safari Park offers courses in animal care, whilst enrichment and delivery partnership with Kidderminster Harriers has increased participation in the sport sector. The apprenticeship provision has improved markedly in recent years, and will continue to be based around construction trades, electrical installation, and business.

Lewisham College is an inclusive community college. As a consequence, the curriculum is overwhelmingly centred around the delivery of English, maths, and ESOL (around 75% of the provision). The delivery of these skills are complemented by provision in IT, business, health, construction, and retail. There is a small amount of elective home education for young people aged 14-16 in partnership with the local authority. The College therefore contributes directly to all four of the sector areas identified within the LSIP.

- Newcastle College is able to offer a range of courses that are available in only a handful of GFE colleges, as they are typically associated with specialist training providers. This includes aircraft and aerospace engineering, rail engineering, and energy. The College has sizable provision in the sectors of

health, creative, engineering and transport, construction, IT and digital, performance, retail and service, IT and digital, business, and leisure. Newcastle College University Centre has a significant footprint in the higher education sector, and is the only FE-based institution in England to hold Indefinite Degree Awarding Powers. The apprenticeship provision has been consolidated into specialist provision in recent years, and is now stable with good quality delivery and outcomes. Newcastle College has demonstrable strengths in the provision for learners with SEND.

- Newcastle Sixth Form's curriculum aim is to support progression to university study (which is the main destination for young people at the College). The range of A Level subjects offered is relatively broad, alongside an Access to A Level study programme (GCSE). The largest subjects are psychology, sociology, law and English.

- In addition to the requirement for literacy and numeracy skills development, the local employment priorities for Southwark College include the health, creative, business, and ESOL sectors, where the majority of provision resides. The College offered T Levels in digital production for the first time in 2023/24, with health and management starting in 2024/25.

- West Lancashire College is a small GFEC that currently operates in the health, construction, business, childcare, ICT, service and sport sectors. Leaders have been enacting plans to develop a strong technical offering at L3. A very small A Level offering is now closed to new entrants and will run out entirely in 2025.

# INTENT & CONTRIBUTION TO LOCAL SKILLS

NCG has a mission, to enable social mobility and economic prosperity through exceptional education. There are numerous examples of how NCG's staff are able to evidence their contribution to the mission, by supporting learners to reach their goals. Leaders and managers have conscientiously aligned the curriculum to reflect the needs of the local, regional, and national economies served by the Group. As a result, NCG makes, at least, a reasonable contribution to meeting skills needs.

The NCG mission, and underpinning values and strategic aims were developed in consultation with staff, learners, and stakeholders. The mission, is NCG's strategic intent statement, which is implemented through college accountability statements. The design of this process allows NCG's colleges to maintain effective local collaboration, whilst working within a consistent group framework.

A governance review, to further develop the place-based model, and reduce duplication of role, was completed in 2023/24. Dozens of stakeholders have joined as Corporation governors, or members of the reformed college boards. The latter seeking to ensure curriculum alignment with local and regional skills priority, whilst the former concentrates on the statutory governance of the Group. Senior leaders are well connected in their locality with local skills partnerships, employer boards, and in civic and educational partnerships. For example, the CEO's concurrent role as a trustee of the Newcastle NHS Trust, and the Principal of Kidderminster College who is a vice chair of the Worcestershire Local Skills Partnership Board.

The NCG Executive Team meets each half term to monitor and review the sector policy landscape, whilst the FE Academic Board is focused on curriculum operations. NCG leaders ensure that labour market intelligence (LMI) underpins the development of strategic plans, through the use of several specialist software platforms (e.g. EMSI, Vector). The continued use of this software, in addition to purposeful dialogue with civic



leaders, employers, and influential sector clusters will continue to inform NCG's accountability statements and curriculum plans.

At levels below senior leadership, the systematic engagement with stakeholders is becoming more consistent. In the best provision, teachers work closely with employers to review the content of the course and to help with assessment (usually through presentations, case studies, live briefs, or skills competitions). For example, engineering at Newcastle College, and hairdressing at Kidderminster College. The NCG Skills for Business Plan, Quality Plan, and NCG Guarantee all are working concurrently to ensure examples of good practice become systemic across the curriculum. In addition all courses will be required to complete social action, and skills competitions as part of their contribution to the NCG Guarantee from 2024/25.

The Group operates provision in all subject sector areas, with a number of strategic specialisms established that will continue to develop. For

example: Energy and Aviation at Newcastle College, A Levels at Newcastle Sixth Form, supported learning (SEND) at all colleges, but with sizable cohorts at both Lewisham College and Newcastle College. NCG has a relatively large footprint in the construction and building sector. The Group employs expert staff associated with tender writing, and project management. This has resulted in over £41m of capital invested in infrastructure and technology since 2022. It has enabled leaders at West Lancashire College to enhance the STEM offer, whilst at Carlisle College and Kidderminster College, there is now additional capacity for the construction and green sectors. Southwark College has recently invested in micro-generation of green energy, for the upskilling and retraining of adults.

Visit <https://leaders.ncgrp.co.uk/> to see current updates associated with NCG's conscientious contribution to skills, community influence, and reach.

# QUALITY OF EDUCATION: TEACHING AND TRAINING STANDARDS

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment (TLA) at NCG remains good.

Leaders started the process of introducing a new Quality Plan to staff, which contain a number of streamlined standards for teaching and training. These NCG standards are naturally aligned to the common themes within the ITE early career framework, DfE standards, ETF standards, and HE Professional Standards. Whilst career professionals will continue to work to these national standards, the NCG standards provide a simple framework for the evaluation of teaching, leadership, and a limited number of provision types, from which to direct continuous improvement activity and training. The standards for teaching and training are used below for commentary on the mid-year position.

Most teachers use their expert knowledge well for considered planning, involving expert colleagues or stakeholders to develop a clearly sequenced, logical, and challenging scheme of delivery. There are naturally occurring examples in digital and engineering at Newcastle College, where teachers work with industry contacts to ensure content is aligned to industry-specific requirements, and in health at Southwark College who engage with health professionals to help plan the delivery sequence. In the sport provision at Carlisle College the focus is on advanced and higher-level skill development, leading to industry-recognised certification such as Tennis Activator, and lifeguard courses.

Teachers have high expectations for behaviour, and as a result learners display positive attitudes in college. Teachers are generally competent in the delivery of explicit direct instruction, demonstration, and/or coaching to introduce new skills and knowledge to the learners. There are growing examples of good practice in NCG's new T Level provision, for example digital and early years at West Lancashire College; whilst standards are consistently high at Newcastle Sixth Form College, and in hospitality and the service industries at Newcastle College, Kidderminster College, and Carlisle College.

Despite offering competent and conscientious delivery, attendance is too low within maths and English aims. Learners often arrive with some of the lowest entry, on average, in England, hence teachers often have to work hard to fill basic attainment gaps. This is especially the case at Lewisham College, Southwark College, and Kidderminster College.

Teachers holistically ensure that delivery builds knowledge and skills from starting points, based on initial formative assessment. Questioning and task-based activity typically have purpose and a given success criteria. However this tends to be front-loaded in sessions, and lead practitioners will continue to work with teachers to ensure episodes of new learning are more frequently checked through the sessions. Positive examples are evident within English at Lewisham College, CAD at West Lancashire College, sport at Kidderminster and performing arts at Carlisle College. ESOL is also often a strength across the Group, particularly at Southwark College, Newcastle College, and adults at Lewisham College.

A small minority of teachers are not always using assessment strategies, with skilful questioning and/or pacy activities to check the attainment of new skills and knowledge, and address misconceptions during the session. Likewise not all teachers systematically check that learning has indeed taken place after an activity by carefully reviewing written work. This aspect tends to be stronger in academic delivery, and in practical sessions for skills, including apprenticeships. Good examples have been observed in A Level psychology and law; film at Southwark College, and art and design at Carlisle College. Professional development is helping here, for example leaders at Newcastle College have been prioritising assessment for learning for the past few years. In addition, improving achievement rates in diploma qualifications (which include external assessment) is also indicating progress in the last 12 months.

Most teachers plan activities well to allow students to demonstrate or display their knowledge and skills fluently. This is strongest when learners are participating in class-based, or NCG grassroots skills competitions, in performance based curriculum, and in practical sessions. For example music technology at Kidderminster College and performance at Newcastle College, the construction trades at Newcastle College, brickwork at West Lancashire College and Carlisle College.

There is more consistency required in the frequent use of clear and useful feedback to support learner progress, alongside helpful actions to ensure that learners understand how to secure the relevant knowledge and skills.

Again, more professional development will be provided next year to improve the frequency of assessment, building on relevant pedagogy (for example Blooms or Williams). Related to this theme is the need to establish more consistent norms for the recording of learning. Notes are occasionally unstructured, and teachers are occasionally not maximising value adding time by asking learners to record too much information from the wipeboard, which is known to them already, or easily accessible through other methods such as respected web-sources, and/or e-books. The use of notes for technical glossaries, weblinks/QRs, knowledge organisers, key points, and practise exercise and activity records will continue to be encouraged.

There are now frequent examples of learners being able to demonstrate their skills under examined or competition pressure with the use of skills competitions, to support recall and work standards. The use of competition for assessment is stronger in Carlisle College, Kidderminster College, and Newcastle College, yet grassroots participation is becoming embedded in many more areas across the Group, and it will continue to feature as an aspect of the NCG Guarantee going forward.

# QUALITY OF EDUCATION: IMPACT & OUTCOMES 2023/24

Please refer to the annex on page 44 for a summary of the 2023/24 outcomes. The use of sector rates, and NCG comparison rates, is now becoming less problematic as there are now several years of 'typical' assessment, following adjustments made between 2020 and 2023 due to COVID. Comparisons in the annex are subsequently made based on the best available data sets.

Please note, some caution and context should be applied when comparing NCG's colleges using the detail in the annex or scorecard overleaf. The college curriculum offer varies considerably from one another, and these headline rates can be influenced by several factors. For example, the proportion of English and maths aims, the proportion of 2-year linear aims (such as A Levels), and the use of legitimate short course aims for adult employment courses, ESOL, or for work experience. The rates are shown here to replicate the methodology used nationally, at the headline level.

## Scorecard Summary 2023/24

The 2023/24 scorecard (page 14) highlights a number of key performance measures. The scorecard also indicates the SAR judgements, aligned to the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework.

The scorecard is a mix of summary qualitative evaluations, such as ETLA and survey information, and lagging measures such as achievement and attendance. The information can be used to superficially justify the headline strengths and areas for improvement, however there is more detail and context within the individual college SARs.

At the headline level, NCG's achievement is above the national averages for 16-18 provision, adult courses, and apprenticeships. Retention, and pass rates are on a 3 year trend improvement for young people and apprentices, and are steady for adults. The variation between colleges tends to reflect the curriculum mix at this level, however there is programme-level variation within all college data. A key aim of the new quality plan will be to a) measure this variation more carefully; and b) seek to reduce variation through the use of consistent professional standards.



NCG's attendance is below target expectations, and whilst college leaders indicate that the good behaviour of learners is compensating within key judgments associated with behaviour and attitudes, attendance requires further improvement.

The NCG sustained destination rate has improved by 2 points to 93% across the Group, following a marginal decline in 2023; learner satisfaction rates remain secure, and are very good in apprenticeships and higher education.

Teaching is generally evaluated to be secure, however leaders at all levels will work to raise the bar to ensure that even more learners make rapid and sustained progress. Deep dives often find opportunities for learners to take ownership for the recording of notes, and teacher feedback. Teachers are being encouraged to make more systematic use of stakeholder expertise in the planning of the curriculum, and in using skills competitions to showcase the development of new skills and knowledge.

# MASTER TARGET FILE 2023/24

## – SCORECARD AT YEAR END (PERIOD 14, OCTOBER 2024)

A summary of the headline KPIs and associated outcomes are shown below.

The scorecard is the headline position for the final ILR submission of the year, against KPI.

The data is a combination of quantitative measures that are uniformly collated across the FES sector (i.e. achievement rates),

and qualitative metrics collated by NCG leaders and managers to help illustrate the quality of education across the Group (such as destination data, learner surveys, and 'secure teaching'.)

The SAR grade is used for internal quality monitoring purposes, and local accountability. All colleges are required to complete their own self

assessment report, which is approved by college boards.

It is important to exercise caution when comparing college to college. The curriculum subject mix, level and duration of qualification type, and entry level of learners makes a significant contribution to the data; hence we are not comparing like with like in all cases.

Strategic KPIs	Carlisle		Kidderminster		Lewisham		Newcastle		Newcastle Sixth		Southwark		West Lancs.		NCG	NCG
	R14	Target	R14	Target	R14	Target	R14	Target	R14	Target	R14	Target	R14	Target	23/24	22/23
SAR Overall Effectiveness	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Positive Destinations (%)	93	95	93	93	90	90	93	93	93	93	92	90	94	93	92	90
Positive Destinations Apps (%)	97	96	95	97	100	97	95	97	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	92	97	95	96
Quality of TLA as %	90	95	84	95	92	95	94	95	93	95	96	92	96	95	92	94
Learner Progress ALPS Client	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Operational KPIs																
16 -18 Achievement (%)	84	84	77	84	75	86	88	86	79	84	87	87	81	86	84	82
19+ Achievement (%)	78	88	79	88	86	90	90	90	N/A	N/A	92	92	82	90	88	88
HN Achievement (%)	81	86	86	86	87	86	93	86	100	100	89	89	87	86	87	86
LDD Achievement (%)	81	84	77	84	81	86	88	86	75	84	86	86	84	86	84	83
Non LDD Achievement (%)	83	84	78	86	84	86	89	86	80	84	91	91	80	88	87	87
FSM Achievement (%)	81	84	76	84	76	86	88	86	63	84	87	87	83	88	83	82
CES Achievement (%)	80	86	100	86	80	86	82	86	50		80	80	77	86	81	80
Apprenticeship Ach Overall (%)	64	70	65	70	65	65	63	65	N/A	N/A	100	N/A	61	65	64	55
Apprenticeship High Grade (%)	33	40	20	40	31	40	43	40	N/A	N/A	100	40	55	40	38	34
Attendance 16-18 (%)	83	87	80	85	79	85	83	85	86	87	82	85	83	85	82	81
Attendance 19+ (%)	80	87	82	85	78	85	85	85	N/A	N/A	84	85	86	87	82	80
Learner Satisfaction-Term 1 (%)	93	94	93	92	94	94	93	92	92	92	93	92	94	94	93	91
Learner Satisfaction-Term 3 (%)	88	92	92	92	92	94	N/A	N/A	92	92	93	94	94	94	91	91
Apprenticeship Satisfaction (%)	97	94	97	94	N/A	N/A	93	92	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	93	92	95	92

# COLLEGE SUMMARIES



LEWISHAM  
COLLEGE



SOUTHWARK  
COLLEGE







# CARLISLE COLLEGE

## SARAH MCGRATH, PRINCIPAL



### Areas of Strength

These are the demonstrable headline areas of strength, outlined in the College self assessment report.

- The proportion of learners moving on to sustained positive destinations is high, with the vast majority moving into higher education, apprenticeships, and employment.
- Students demonstrate good behaviours and attitudes with high expectations consistently upheld by staff. Learners show a positive and respectful attitude towards their studies, peers, and staff, contributing to a purposeful and inclusive learning environment.
- The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment at the college is evaluated to be good, with several curriculum areas showing elements of strong practice. This is particularly the case in the arts, sport, bricklaying, and business programmes.
- Teachers and managers at the College ensure that all students are provided with a rich and broad curriculum that promotes good personal development and ensures that all learners are well prepared for their next steps. Effective stakeholder engagement leads to learners being exposed to real working environments and a range of curriculum focussed enrichment opportunities.
- The vast majority of Level 3 students complete their programmes and successfully achieve their intended qualifications. Achievement rates for these programmes are strong and show a three year upward trend.
- The leadership and management of the college is good, providing clear strategic direction and fostering a culture of continuous improvement.

### College Board Lines of Enquiry

These are the areas for continuous improvement and/or development identified in the College self assessment report. They will underpin reports to the College Board throughout the year, to help identify relative progress and impact.

- How effective are actions to ensure consistently high levels of attendance are evident across all programmes? Including those at risk of disengagement?
- What in year measures and evaluations suggest that leaders and managers are taking effective actions to improve high grades and progress scores in GCSE Maths and English, whilst also raising achievement rates in basic skills?
- How effectively are leaders and managers using the NCG standards to find even more consistency in the small minority of curriculum areas where teaching, learning, and assessment improvement actions have been identified.
- What actions are being taken to improve the achievement in ESOL, particularly associated with curriculum design to respond to relocation and social factors affecting the learners?
- What actions are leaders and managing taking to embed the stakeholder-facing NCG standards to further enhance the engagement with key influencers at course level?



# KIDDERMINSTER COLLEGE

## CAT LEWIS, PRINCIPAL



### Areas of Strength

These are the demonstrable headline areas of strength, outlined in the College self assessment report.

- The actions of governors, leaders and managers have had a positive impact on the sustainability of the College, for the benefit of present and future learners. Leaders have undertaken significant workstream projects to refocus the curriculum to align with regional priorities, re-base staffing resources to reflect the College's funding income, and have delivered a new centre for construction, automotive and green skills.
- Leadership and management actions in responding to local and regional skills needs deliver positive impact. The senior leadership team are fully embedded in the local and regional skills agenda, having contributed significantly to the development of the Local Skills Improvement Plan.

- Leaders and managers have co-created an ambitious curriculum in partnership with internal and external stakeholders, which places the College in the position to make a positive contribution to meeting local skills within education programme for young people.
- The majority of teaching and learning is good, with pockets of excellence. The launch of the new draft NCG Quality TLA Standards in year has led to an even more rigorous approach being taken to the evaluation of teaching and learning.
- Quality improvement processes are a strength, with urgent care processes demonstrating tangible impact in study programme and apprenticeship provision.
- Leaders and staff are highly ambitious for all learners and apprentices and prioritise strategies to enable progression and achievement of next steps. 95% of 2022/23 learners achieved sustained positive destinations.
- College staff have a strong commitment to personal development and are working hard to further embed opportunities associated with the NCG Guarantee, reinforcing the strong track record of competing in skills competitions.

### College Board Lines of Enquiry

These are the areas for continuous improvement and/or development identified in the College self assessment report. They will underpin reports to the College Board throughout the year, to help identify relative progress and impact.

- What urgent actions are leaders, managers, and teachers taking to address the relatively low attendance, and low (high grade) pass rate in GCSE English and maths? What in-year indicators suggest this work is having early impact?
- How successful are leadership actions to successfully implement the new Quality Plan standards in TLA, tutorship, NCG Guarantee and key provision types?
- How effectively are college leaders improving overall college attendance rates, including tackling the residual variation in attendance rates in construction and automotive, health & social care, and early years?
- How is the college responding to welfare concerns associated with certain groups of young people; including those potentially being drawn into youth violence, or mental wellbeing issues?
- 
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KIDDERMINSTER  
COLLEGE



KIDDERMINSTER  
COLLEGE



KIDDERMINSTER COURSE

# LEWISHAM COLLEGE

## JAMIE STEVENSON, PRINCIPAL



### Areas of Strength

These are the demonstrable headline areas of strength, outlined in the College self assessment report.

- The Quality of Education for adult learning is 'good', as learners in ESOL Adult, GCSE English & Maths achieve well, benefiting from a flexible, well-planned curriculum, which is responsive to local skills and community needs.
- The Quality of Education for those learners who access additional personal and/or learning support is good. Learners throughout the College, regardless of their individual needs, achieve well, and make significant progress towards the learning and social goals.

- Most learners with high learning needs make good progress and achieve as well or better than neurotypical learners. Learners maintain and improve skills to progress to higher level study, enter voluntary or supported work, and independent living.
- Most Learners with complex behavioural, social and/or emotional needs benefit from well-structured, highly responsive support that supports them to achieve at/beyond that of their peers.
- Learners' personal development is good. Most learners benefit from access to a broad range of opportunities to develop the work-ready and/or personal learning skills that support their effective personal and social development.
- Leaders and Managers have made good progress in embedding a culture of 'Brilliant at the Basics' throughout the College, such that improvements have continued to occur, particularly within the achievement of study programme learners, and those following employment & skills programmes. However there is more to be achieved.
- The College is developing stakeholder partnerships at pace and has demonstrable engagement with employers such as Transport for London and Greggs. This collaboration and engagement has demonstrable outcomes.

### College Board Lines of Enquiry

These are the areas for continuous improvement and/or development identified in the College self assessment report. They will underpin reports to the College Board throughout the year, to help identify relative progress and impact.

- What actions have leaders and teachers of all curriculum areas taken to embed the NCG TLA standards and remove the remaining inconsistency. How effective has this been?
- How effectively are teachers in GCSE maths embedding the NCG Delivery scheme for mastery? how are teachers of English preparing to move to the Pearson 2.0 specification next year? Are there any unintended consequences here?
- How robust are leadership actions to improve the remaining inconsistency on study provision for young people? what in year metrics or evaluations suggest these actions are having positive impact?
- What actions are being taken to further enhance the SEND curriculum to provide a coherent framework of progression opportunities, and employer input, which meets learners' needs?



# NEWCASTLE COLLEGE

## JON RIDLEY, PRINCIPAL



### Areas of Strength

These are the demonstrable headline areas of strength, outlined in the College self assessment report.

- Leaders and managers have co-created an ambitious curriculum alongside internal and external stakeholders, aligned with national and local priorities that deliver the skills, knowledge and behaviours learners need to be successful in their planned next steps. Partners include the mayoral authorities, and the Northeast England Chamber of Commerce to identify skills gaps and growth areas within the local economy which informs curriculum planning.
- Leaders and managers relentlessly focus their attention on the education and training they provide; every teacher receives extensive support to continuously develop their practice including three professional

development (PD) days where expert practitioners aligned to teaching and learning improvement priorities.

- Teaching and learning at Newcastle College is good, with occasional examples of outstanding practice. Teachers deliver teaching and learning in calm and orderly environments.
- Learners effectively develop their knowledge and skills beyond their vocational and technical course because of a curriculum that is well structured. A holistic tutorial and programme of study focuses on preparing learners for life in modern Britain.
- Learning support staff work effectively with teachers so that learners with high needs receive a very good quality of education, with aspects of excellence. Learners' transition into colleges is well planned so they settle early into college life.
- Leaders and managers have collaborated with staff to find ways to manage workload and well-being. Teachers have protected time in their week to focus on their own pedagogical practice. Line managers, provide structured plans to develop practice and can engage with the teaching and learning team where they need further support.
- The quality of Apprenticeship programmes at Newcastle College are good. Apprentices receive very good off the job training in College.

### College Board Lines of Enquiry

What actions are leaders and managers taking to embed the NCG Quality standards, and thereby drive the College provision to outstanding?

In terms of teaching and learning, what actions are being taken to further improve the consistent and highly effective use of assessment for learning principles, to develop demonstrable learner knowledge and skills development?

What actions are leaders and managers taking to drive further improvement in attendance, particularly for the minority of learners who do not attend in line with College expectations? Are these strategies having the desired impact?

How are leaders prioritising expert skill development for teachers and learners in line with the college accountability statement? What evidence suggests that the involvement of stakeholders positively benefit the curriculum?

To what extent are leaders' actions improving standards in Automotive, Business, Construction, Energy and Science, so that they reach College expectations and how will leaders ensure these improvements are sustained over time?

What actions are leaders and managers taking to further improve the retention, and attainment of apprenticeship outcomes?





# NEWCASTLE SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

## SIMON ROSS, PRINCIPAL



### Areas of Strength

These are the demonstrable headline areas of strength, outlined in the College self assessment report.

- Progression to University is strong. 84% of learners progressed to University, of which around a third progressed to Sutton 30 Universities. 90% of learners secured their first choice offer.
- Analysis by the Sixth Form College Association indicates that learners at NSFC are 15% more likely to progress to University, and 4% more likely to progress to Sutton 30 University based on relative national comparators. Learners from the most disadvantaged backgrounds, and learners in receipt of free college meals are 20% more likely to progress to University by studying at the College.
- Leaders, managers, and teachers have high expectations for learners and embody the Group's values and College Respect ethos throughout their interactions with learners. As a result, learners generally make good progress against their starting points. Learners

make above average progress in art, film, law, further maths, media, and psychology.

- Teaching and learning at NSFC is delivered by highly qualified, subject experts. The teachers use this expertise to ensure learners experience engaging and challenging lessons, through an appropriately sequenced curriculum designed to support the rigour of synoptic assessment.
- Assessment at NSFC is effectively sequenced to identify learner gaps in knowledge and adapt planning accordingly to ensure rapid and sustained learner progress. Learners acknowledge this in survey.
- The development of learners' wider skills and competencies at NSFC is good. Learners engage with carefully sequenced and developed curricula which is often informed by local stakeholders to develop new knowledge and skills, as well as engaging in a breadth of enriching opportunities. The latter includes Duke of Edinburgh Award, as well as trips and cultural visits to a range of university cities. In addition to local visits.
- The enrichment programme at the College is good with 35 enrichments available for learners to engage with. A new link with Newcastle United Foundation has further increased the opportunity for physical activity, which has resulted in improved attendance to enrichment.
- The early career teacher programme concurrently supports the vast majority of colleagues to make good progress in their first two years of teaching, and helps with helps with recruitment challenges. These teachers agree that the guidance and feedback they receive helps them demonstrable improve and adjust to teaching life.

### College Board Lines of Enquiry

These are the areas for continuous improvement and/or development identified in the College self assessment report. They will underpin reports to the College Board throughout the year, to help identify relative progress and impact.

- How effectively are college leaders and managers embedding the NCG TLA standards, with a specific focus on the intelligent use of assessment to ensure learners make rapid and sustained progress?
- What actions are leaders taking to continue to develop teacher practice and pedagogy? what evaluation(s) suggest that this is continuing to improve learner experience and attainment?
- How effectively are college leaders tackling the residual variation in attendance and retention rates – particularly for disadvantaged and LDD learners?
- What additional actions are leaders, managers and teachers taking to ensure 'high starters' are making their intended progress in their subjects ?



# SOUTHWARK COLLEGE

## JANE BUTTON, PRINCIPAL



### Areas of Strength

These are the demonstrable headline areas of strength, outlined in the College self assessment report.

- Southwark College staff are highly ambitious for their learners. They are successful in helping learners in developing the professional behaviours that they need to succeed in either employment, or Higher Education in the future.
- Leaders and managers have used their well-established links with Southwark Council and local employers such as Guys and St Thomas' Trust, Anjuna Beat, Code Institute and the Old Vic to develop a curriculum with industry relevant content and effective sequencing to allow learners to improve their knowledge. As a result the intent of the college curriculum is strongly

mapped to skills and employment gaps identified in the Central London Forward Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP).

- Teaching and learning is secure. Most staff use rigorous and frequent assessments to check learners understanding. Managers regularly review learner progress against their target grades and respond to areas of concern.
- Leaders and managers recognise the importance of the college workforce. Investment has been made in staff professional development; staff are regularly completing industry placements to develop their understanding of latest developments in the workplace. This is shown by the excellent staff survey feedback which shows staff feel supported and valued at the College.
- Managers and staff carefully consider the needs of learners when planning courses. For example, there is good practice in developing new ESOL provision to aid progression.
- The Adult Curriculum at Southwark College is very effective. Adult ESOL; Access to High Education; English and maths; Digital Skills and Employability are directly responding to the needs of the local area.
- Governors, leaders and managers have a detailed understanding of the strengths of the college. Where areas for improvement were identified in the 22/23 SAR, staff have made significant improvements to resolve these issues.

### College Board Lines of Enquiry

- What actions are leaders and managers taking to successfully implement the new Quality Plan standards, with a particular focus on tutorship and the NCG Guarantee? What specific actions will managers and teachers be taking to ensure there is an ongoing focus on wellbeing / mental health/fitness and safety?
- How effectively are college leaders tackling the variation in attendance particularly in English and maths and tutorials. What metrics indicate that improvement is being made?
- What actions are leaders taking to further improve high grade achievement in GCSE English and GCSE maths and increasing L3VA attainment. What indicators suggest the pilot with Eduqas for GCSE maths is beneficial for learners?
- What indicators suggest that staff are making progress in narrowing the remaining achievement/retention gap of study programme 16-18 students, care experienced, LDD and those from a mixed heritage background.

A photograph of four students walking past a large red sign that reads "SOUTHWARK COLLEGE". The sign is mounted on a grey stone wall. The students are dressed in casual attire, including jackets, hoodies, and overalls. One student is wearing a black hoodie with "DEW & DIER AT" written on the sleeve. Another student is wearing an orange hoodie and black overalls. A fourth student is wearing a blue and red jacket. The building has a modern architectural style with a grey stone facade and a large window with a green and yellow display. The sky is overcast.

SOUTHWARK  
COLLEGE

# WEST LANCASHIRE COLLEGE

## LISA HOSEASON, DEPUTY PRINCIPAL



### Areas of Strength

These are the demonstrable headline areas of strength, outlined in the College self assessment report.

- Leaders have worked with stakeholders to ensure that the curriculum intent is clear, appropriate and successful. Employer collaboration is rich and meaningful at all levels of the College. All curriculum areas have developed links with local stakeholders, and each area can now evidence a least three key partners.
- Sustained learner destination surveys indicate that the vast majority of learners have gone on to further and higher education, employment, or training.
- Teaching on vocational programmes at the College is holistically good as evidenced by ETLA sampling and group deep dives. There are good

standards of teaching in areas such as engineering, service, early years and inclusive learning. There is also good teaching in GCSE maths, despite some challenging results.

- Outcomes on vocational courses are good. The highest rates can be found in health, education, digital and creative, and the service industries.
- Student voice surveys activity suggest that satisfaction is high. Nearly 95% of learners confirmed that they that they were satisfied with their course on completion.
- The provision for adult learners engaging with online courses is well delivered, and structured. As a result, student satisfaction is also very high.
- The College works with long-term delivery partners for the benefit of the community of the College and Group. These course are aligned to employability opportunities, to widen participation, or offer adults the opportunity to balance online study around life and work. The outcomes and delivery quality continues to be good, whilst the management and integration of subcontractors, continues to improve.
- Learners with high needs are very well supported and return high, and improving achievement rates.
- Apprenticeship outcomes are improving and are now above a low national average.
- Work Experience and enrichment opportunities are very strong. The first year of the Turing trips has led to dozens of learners the opportunity to engage with work experience and industry placements in Cyprus, Malta and Vienna.

### College Board Lines of Enquiry

These are the areas for continuous improvement and/or development identified in the College self assessment report. They will underpin reports to the College Board throughout the year, to help identify relative progress and impact.

- What actions are leaders and managers taking to implement the Quality Plan standards. Are these actions having impact on the quality of delivery, learner experiences?
- What actions are leaders taking to improve the high grade pass rates on maths and English, and ESOL? What in-year indicators are used to demonstrate progress is being made?
- How effectively are college leaders embedding the NCG leadership standards to tackle the remaining variation in attendance rates?
- What residual factors are impacting on the retention of 2-year diploma courses? How are leaders ensuring T Level retention is high?
- What actions are leaders and managers taking to embed the NCG Guarantee standards, to further enhance the cross college personal development programme?



# NCG HIGHER EDUCATION

ALAN FENTON, DEPUTY PRINCIPAL, NEWCASTLE COLLEGE



NCG’s Higher Education Strategy continues to drive a fundamental commitment to develop an inclusive community, that typifies the widening of access, the support to social mobility, and success in economic prosperity and/or personal development.

The staff at NCG believe that the colleges are place makers, as graduates of NCG HE’s provision stay and succeed within the communities served by NCG.

Colleagues across NCG were delighted last year to be awarded Taught Degree Awarding Powers on an indefinite basis by the Office for Students. The power applies nationally to all colleges of NCG, with students at Carlisle College, Kidderminster College and Newcastle College University Centre (NCUC) studying for NCG awards.

The NCG HE curriculum and student offer is intended to be more than just a degree; students are treated as co-creators and are active in creating a vibrant learning environment. As a consequence of this approach, the National Student Survey results indicate that the NCG HE students really value the teaching they receive on their course; the quality of assessment and feedback; and the high levels of academic support.

The provision now includes an additional partner, ESL, to complement the positive relationship established with Organisational Learning College (OLC) last academic year. Around a quarter of NCG’s provision is now franchised.

## NCG Student Voice

The NSS results provide an important indication of how NCG HE students feel about their teaching, and wider educational experience. This enables leaders to monitor the quality of teaching, learner experience, and outcomes. Enhancement plans are subsequently developed, implemented, monitored, and evaluated at every delivery level of the curriculum implementation, to respond to areas for development and also share effective practice.

NCG’s results in 2023/24 highlight that six of the seven scaled positivity indicators are above benchmark. Of which, five of the themes correspond with Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) Gold levels. The exception being learning resource, which remains a key strategic priority and is being tackled by a newly approved NCG investment and infrastructure plan. The rate has improved by several points in the last 2 years as a result of sustained investment.

College	Participation & National Student Survey (NSS) Positivity Scores						
	2022/23 (n)	2023/24	TEF	NSS Teaching	NSS Learning	NSS Assessment	NSS Resources
NCG (all)	2451	3422	Silver	89 (Gold)	85 (Silver)	87 (Gold)	78 (Bronze)
Carlisle	105	84					
Kidderminster College	31	21					
Organisational Learning Centre (partnership)	91	268					
Elizabeth School London (partnership)		646					
Newcastle College University Centre	2214	2403					





# INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION (ITE) SUMMARY 2023/24

## Areas of Strength

These are the demonstrable headline areas of strength, outlined in the College self assessment report ITE is delivered by two NCG colleges: Newcastle College and Carlisle College.

- There is a clear and coherent rationale for the overall ITE curriculum. Programmes at levels 5, 6 and 7 are structured and sequenced to allow trainees to build valuable knowledge and skills based on contemporary pedagogy.
- The curriculum has been carefully designed to reflect professional body requirements; the content of the programme; and the academic, subject specific and teaching experience of the trainee teachers.
- The provision of a SEND specialist route in Newcastle College is intended to reflect the needs of the sector.
- The promotion of FE ITE bursaries has helped recruit specialist teachers, particularly for learners with special educational needs but also for maths and English.
- Leadership and Management of curriculum implementation is secure. Leaders ensure generic and subject specialist pedagogical training helps trainees gain a realistic understanding of the demands associated with teaching.
- Trainees are successful in establishing positive relationships with their learners, and over the course of the programme in developing their skills to manage their learners' behaviour.
- Teacher educators demonstrate current and in-depth understanding of educational research and confidently apply this in their curriculum for trainees. All are actively involved in the scholarship of teaching and learning.



- Assessments are grounded in practice. Throughout the programme, student teachers are encouraged to make use of primary sources, evaluate academic perspectives and their own practice to critically reflect on what they have learned.
- At Newcastle College support for placements is excellent, not only supported by a designated role within the department but also teaching staff to ensure students are placed in appropriate settings. In addition, there are opportunities for students to observe across a range of lessons within their placements, for example, different levels, sizes of classes, practical, theory or online delivery methods.
- There is a good system of peer observations in place, that are supportive in improving practice.
- Good relationships are in place across the two colleges with regular efficient communications and documented meetings between tutors and mentors. There are also

standardised approaches in place regarding programme planning, assessment, academic support, and through internal standardisation.

## College Board Lines of Enquiry

These are the areas for continuous improvement and/or development identified in the College self assessment report. They will underpin reports to the College Board throughout the year, to help identify relative progress and impact.

- To what extent is the provision, training, and commitment to subject specific mentorship now systemic for all new career teachers?
- What alternative models of delivery can be employed to improve continuation and completion? (Including the potential use of an apprenticeship standard to better meet the needs of trade-based new trainees)





**ANNEX A**  
**ABOUT NCG**

# ABOUT NCG

NCG is a value-based organisation, with its strategic direction based on a single mission to enable social mobility and economic prosperity through exceptional education.

Each college is led by a dedicated principal and a team of locally-appointed senior college leaders. Principals are accountable to the Corporation Board through their position on the NCG Executive Board, and the college stakeholder board. NCG's CEO is Liz Bromley. Liz leads NCG's Executive Team which consists of all college principals, who work alongside two Executive Principals (with responsibility for curriculum and people).

The Executive Team is completed by the Chief Financial Officer; Chief Information, Data & Estates Officer; and three Executive Directors - with responsibility for external

engagement, Quality, and People, and the Director of Marketing and Communications.



Enabling social mobility and economic prosperity through exceptional education”

## OUR VALUES

NCG's staff colleagues, learners and governors have worked collaboratively to help define the core values of the organisation. These values underpin the desired behaviours and effectively set out how colleagues will work with each other, as defining characteristics. The values are intended to underpin the culture and beliefs of the organisation, and foster a sense of pride in working for NCG. The values provide a most basic framework on how to make the right decisions based on the agreed, shared value set.

### We value and empower people by:

Being both inclusive and diverse

Trusting and respecting our communities

Taking ownership whilst working collaboratively

Inspiring excellence and curiosity

# LEGAL STATUS AND DELIVERY REGIONS

## NCG's Colleges Summary of Legal Status and Delivery Regions

DIVISION	LEGAL ENTITY	OFFICE LOCATION	DELIVERY LOCATIONS
Carlisle College	NCG Corporation	Carlisle	Cumbria
Kidderminster College	NCG Corporation	Kidderminster	Worcestershire
Lewisham College	NCG Corporation	Lewisham	London
Newcastle College	NCG Corporation	Newcastle upon Tyne	North East Region
Newcastle Sixth Form College	NCG Corporation	Newcastle upon Tyne	North East Region
Southwark College	NCG Corporation	Southwark	London
West Lancashire College	NCG Corporation	Skelmersdale	West Lancashire

## Current locations of NCG Colleges



# 2023/24 HEADCOUNT DATA (FUNDED LEARNERS)

The data is representative of R14 ESFA ILR data for 2023/24. Higher education and full cost commercial students are therefore excluded. The headline position shows growth of 3461 learners: including growth of 403 in the 16-18 age group, and 3038 19+ learners (of which 505 are subcontracted learners). Learners in receipt of high needs funding has increased by 13, whilst apprenticeships has decreased by 210 as a result of curriculum rationalisation. Please note the column totals may not always sum, as each learner is counted once at each relevant level if studying several concurrent aims, at different levels (for example some learners may study a L3 diploma, alongside GCSE at L2). The final age group totals count the learner just once.

## Education and Training

### Learners completing in 2023/24 (Excluding Apprenticeships)

#### Headcount

#### NVQ Level by Age Group

College	1 or below		2		3		4+	Other	All levels		2023/24
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	19+	19+	16-18	19+	Total
Carlisle College	847	317	826	217	625	100	2	NA	1381	557	1934
Kidderminster College	308	175	770	168	481	110	NA	NA	1109	390	1493
Lewisham College	732	2991	527	1035	326	217	54	2	1182	3655	4835
Newcastle College	1332	5780	2159	1562	3660	597	51	98	5659	4232	9891
Newcastle Sixth Form College	NA	NA	122	NA	1397	NA	NA	NA	1458	NA	1458
Southwark College	293	1713	566	416	420	211	NA	28	1017	2086	3101
West Lancashire College	351	269	396	2109	302	115	NA	NA	651	2426	3067
West Lancashire College (Distance)	NA	NA									
Grand Total	3863	8222	5261	11346	7163	19216	107	128	12399	19216	31593

### Apprenticeships on programme in 2023/24

#### Headcount

#### Programme Level by Age Group

College	Frameworks			Standards			All levels			2023/24
	16-18	19-23	24+	16-18	19-23	24+	16-18	19-23	24+	
Carlisle College	3	1	NA	465	162	71	465	163	71	690
Kidderminster College	NA	NA	NA	115	47	14	115	47	14	176
Lewisham College	NA	NA	NA	22	31	12	22	31	12	65
Newcastle College	2	2	NA	492	303	119	494	305	119	913
Southwark College	NA	NA	NA	1	1	NA	1	1	NA	2
West Lancashire College	0	1	NA	55	30	12	55	31	12	96
Grand Total	5	4	NA	1150	574	228	1155	578	228	1941

### High Needs Learners

College	Learners
Carlisle College	100
Kidderminster College	88
Lewisham College	246
Newcastle College	131
Newcastle Sixth Form College	2
Southwark College	66
West Lancashire College	82
Grand Total	715



**ANNEX B**  
**PERFORMANCE**  
**SUMMARY**



# KEY DATA AND OUTCOMES 2023/24

This annex uses NCG ILR (Individualised Learner Record) data to present the outcomes for the 2023/24 academic year. The use of historic sector and NCG rates for comparisons is now becoming less problematic, as qualification assessment and outcomes levels are returning to pre-pandemic levels. However the outcomes will continue to be impacted on L3 qualification reform. For example, the introduction of T Levels and their 2-year duration will increasingly impact on retention rates, as most equivalent courses at present are set at just 1-year duration. However at this point in time it is too small a cohort to materially impact on headline rates.

Please note, some caution and context should be applied when comparing NCG colleges using the charts overleaf. The college curriculum offer varies considerable, and these headline rates can be influenced by several factors. For example, the proportion of English and maths aims, the proportion of 2-year linear aims (such as A Levels), and the use of legitimate short course aims for adult employment course, or for work experience aims. The rates are shown here to replicate the methodology used nationally, at the headline level.

## Education programmes for young people (aged 16-18) – approx. 45% of NCG’s ESFA-funded provision by headcount

At the headline level, achievement at NCG has increased to 84.4% from 82.4% last year and from 81% the year previous. This is aligned to the pre-pandemic rate (2018/19) of 84%.

The comparison with the 2018/19 rate is in the context of general

growth, more maths and English aims, and curriculum reform which includes more examined units in level 3 aims. Achievement at level 2 and level 3 has improved in the last year. Leaders anticipated the need for restorative measures, as learners arrived at college following several

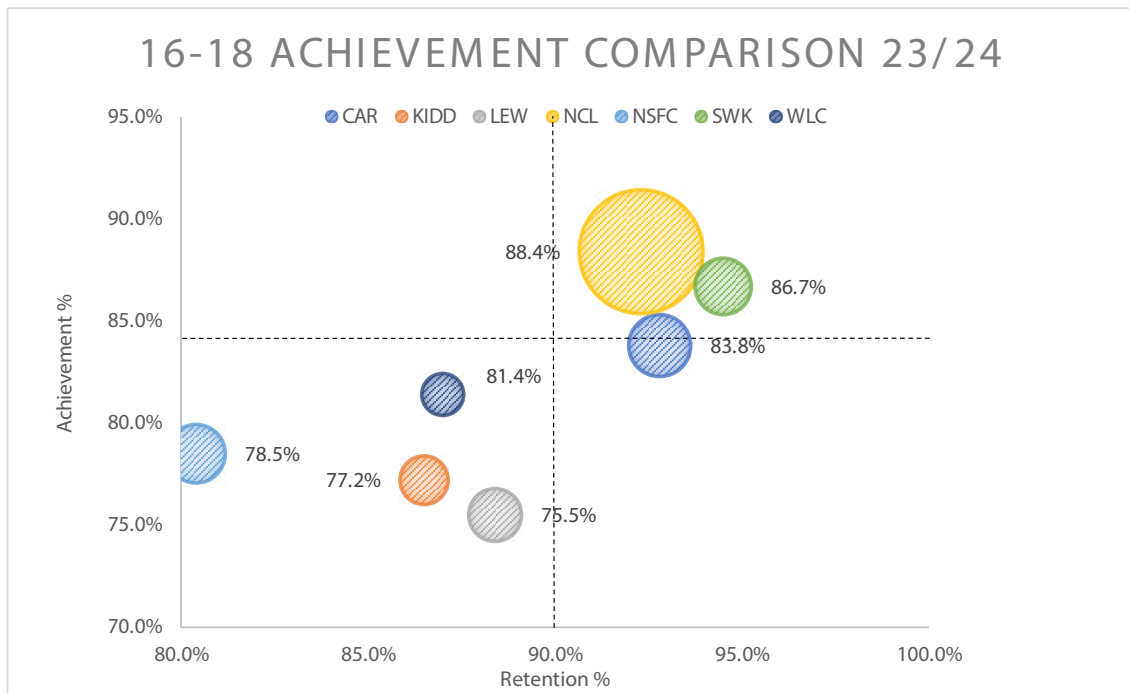
years of disrupted education. As a result learners generally settled quickly, however leaders, managers, and teachers have had to work hard to establish high expectations for attendance and behaviour, for a significant minority of learners.

Improvement actions associated with diploma aims, which dipped following the return to examined assessment methods in 2022, have yielded positive improvements. Diploma rates subsequently improved to 88% from 84% last year, and 81% the year previous. Achievement for awards, certificates, and other regulated provision are all showing improvement.

Challenges with attendance and achievement remain within GCSE maths and English aims, despite a 2point improvement in headline achievement (see page 48). There is context - the year 12 and 13 cohort arrived having sat examinations, albeit with some adjusted conditions for the year 13s. Hence the national pass rate has declined in recent years as Ofqual stage a return to 'typical' outcome levels.



Figure 1 volume of 16-18 leavers and achievement rate.



## Provision for adult learners (aged 19 and above) – approx. 50% of NCG’s ESFA-funded provision by headcount

At the headline level, the adult achievement rate has remained steady at 88% in the last year. There are variances at qualification-type level ranging from a low of 75% for functional English and maths (the same rate as last 2 years), to a high for short-non-regulated provision at 93%. The length of course remains a determining factor, with longer provision such as diplomas achieving at a rate of 84% (improving by 9points in the past 2 years) and Access to HE remaining steady at 84%. Other longer-duration courses, such as GCSE, are relatively stable at 85%, as are certificates at 88%. The vast majority of adult provision (around 95%) is at the foundation and intermediate level, reflecting the needs of the local communities served.

Figure 2 (below) shows the relative college performance by volume (size of bubble), retention and achievement. The curriculum mix continues to influence the headline rate, with large volumes of successful modularised ESOL provision at Newcastle College, Lewisham College, and Southwark College help lift their respective achievement rates.

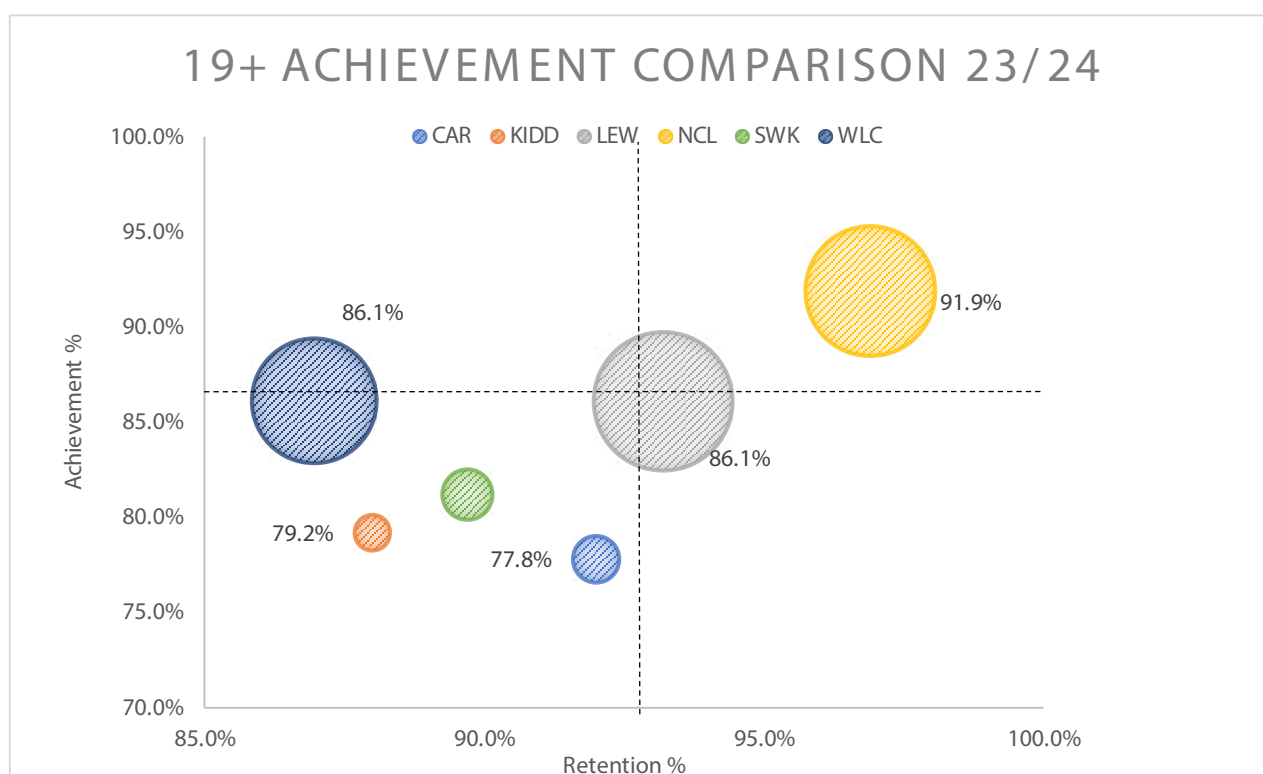
The amount of subcontracting is managed carefully and whilst there is growth of around 500 aims, it is with reputable, long-standing partners, delivering provision aligned to NCG's mission and strategic intent. All providers are graded 'good' by Ofsted, Logistics Skills received an 'outstanding' judgment during the academic year. The 2023/24

achievement rate for subcontractors was 90% (2726 aims).

Learners on study programmes (aged 16-18), who have not achieved (at least a) GCSE grade 4 in their English and maths are required to carry on studying them in FE as a condition of funding.



Figure 2 volume of adult leavers and achievement rate



## English and maths programmes...

It is also worth noting that college leaders take a slightly different approach to the maths and English curriculum model. For example Kidderminster College and West Lancashire College prefer a GCSE-based approach for just about all young people. Alternatively Newcastle College and Lewisham College, Southwark College, use a combination of GCSE (for learners with grade 3 and grade 2) and functional skills (for those below). The basic skills model allows learners to achieve a milestone qualification, but ultimately could delay a grade progress in GCSE. The efficacy of both approaches will continue to be monitored by the NCG Academic Board and a working group will examine the efficacy of the different models in 2024/25.

The number of resit entries has increased by 800 enrolments in 2023/24 following Ofqual's return to typical grade examination boundaries. This has increased the number of learners

who have arrived without a good pass at grade 4 or above, and made it statistically more difficult for resitting learners to make a grade progress. For example those in year 13 will have arrived having sat examinations with some adjustments. MIDES data indicates that several of NCG's colleges have about the lowest attainment and entry in England. That said, there is a need for continuous improvement.

The adult GCSE grade 4+ national pass rates are also impacted by the effects of Ofqual moderation. Typically, adult learners will have arrived with a more steady entry profile (from historic GCSEs/equivalents), however any learners aged 19 or 20 will have not sat examinations having been subject to the more generous teacher assessed grades in 2021, and centre assessed grades in 2020.

Nationally 21% of learners aged 17+ (adults and young people) achieved a grade 9-4 in English, compared to 28% in 2023. And in maths, the figure was

17% compared to 18% in 2023.

Despite this context NCG's rates have very marginally improved in both subjects in the 16-18 age range, although only maths has improved for adults (GCSE English declining by 8 points). The combined aged group pass rate is around 2 points higher than the national comparators in both maths, and English. The NCG GCSE English grade 4+ pass rate of 21% has marginally improved from 19% last year. The rate in maths has remained around 15% (a fractional improvement only).

The national rates used below are from MIDES - a tool employed by RCU to analyse the results of 223 GFECs - it is more accurate than JCQ as it removes the adult rates. MIDES also provides a progress metric, and various rankings. The ranking used below is to show the learner population's entry attainment. As an example, Lewisham College has just about the lowest entry attainment in England.

**Table 1 – 16-18 GCSE high pass rates by college and subject**

English and Maths for Young People 2023/24						
Division		Leavers (FS:GCSE)	23/24 basic skills %A	23/24 GCSE High pass (MIDES average)	Prior Attainment Rank MIDES	NCG VA Score
NCG	English	1093 : 2867	78	21% (20%)		
	Maths	2042 : 2822	60	15 (14%)		
Carlisle College	English	52 : 457	85	19	111 / 223	
	Maths	388 : 246	35	21	139 / 223	
Kidderminster College	English	33 : 513	91	8	189 / 223	
	Maths	NA : 555	NA	6	179 / 223	
Lewisham College	English	416 : 317	70	23	221 / 223	
	Maths	535 : 223	58	20	220 / 223	
Newcastle College	English	569 : 920	83	26	74 / 223	
	Maths	978 : 989	68	18	76 / 223	
Sixth Form College	English	NA : 55	NA	44	18 / 223	
	Maths	NA : 103	NA	38	16 / 223	
Southwark College	English	NA : 350	NA	25	186 / 223	
	Maths	120 : 445	76	13	198 / 223	
West Lancashire College	English	23 : 255	83	22	179 / 223	
	Maths	21 : 261	62	8	151 / 223	

**Table 2 - adult GCSE high grade by college and subject**

English and Maths for Adult Learners 2023/24					
Division		Leavers (FS : GCSE)	23/24 basic skills %A	23/24 GCSE High pass%	NCG VA Score
NCG	English	1810 : 482	73	37	
	Maths	1164 : 642	78	41	
Carlisle College	English	259 : 22	50	25	
	Maths	44 : 36	50	42	
Kidderminster College	English	183 : 31	80	42	
	Maths	11 : 77	64	19	
Lewisham College	English	805 : 186	77	22	
	Maths	568 : 142	75	41	
Newcastle College	English	382 : 142	79	61	
	Maths	380 : 264	89	51	
Southwark College	English	29 : 70	83	24	
	Maths	29 : 72	62	41	
West Lancashire College	English	152 : 31	71	44	
	Maths	132 : 50	70	13	

## English and maths (continued)

**Table 2 (above) GCSE high grade by college and subject for adult learners**

The NCG GCSE English rate of 37% has declined from 45% last year; the maths rate of 41% has improved from 36%.

The JQC national average is heavily influenced by the large proportion of younger learners, hence the positive relative position is not a useful comparator. The DfE release the GFEC age band outcomes in March 2025. However in absolute terms, only around a third of the cohort gain a GCSE grade 4+, which requires further improvement.



## Apprenticeships - approx. 3% of NCG's ESFA-funded provision by headcount

Apprenticeships make up just 3% of NCG's ESFA-funded headcount, yet remain a key priority for the Group due to a strategic ambition to offer clear progression routes in key sectors, such as construction, engineering, digital, and business.

The proportion of apprenticeships at NCG has been deliberately managed down as part of a 'reduce to produce' strategy over a 3 year period to improve the delivery model, quality of training, and recruitment of apprentices and employers. The provision continues to struggle nationally with relatively low retention and achievement rates (mainly due to a lower national minimum wage and longer duration of programme). Furthermore the complexity and cost of funding administration is causing a number of providers to question its sustainability (for example Dyson and Cambridge University).

The retention and delivery issues caused by the pandemic have now subsided, and historic NCG-centric issues have now been addressed.

The curriculum footprint has narrowed to focus only on areas of demonstrable

resourcing and expertise, and good quality delivery plans have been developed to ensure milestones are clear, making the measurement of progress more consistent. A new e-portfolio was introduced 2 years ago and is now embedded. Furthermore business improvement to focused on process simplification and compliance controls has yielded results.

In terms of achievement, the rate of 64% remains below aspirations, but well above a low national average. Retention is also well above average at 71%. Apprentices are generally arriving at gateway and prepared for end point assessment. In fact of the continuing apprenticeship standards offered by NCG, all but four are above their respective QAR rates (and two of the four are marginal).

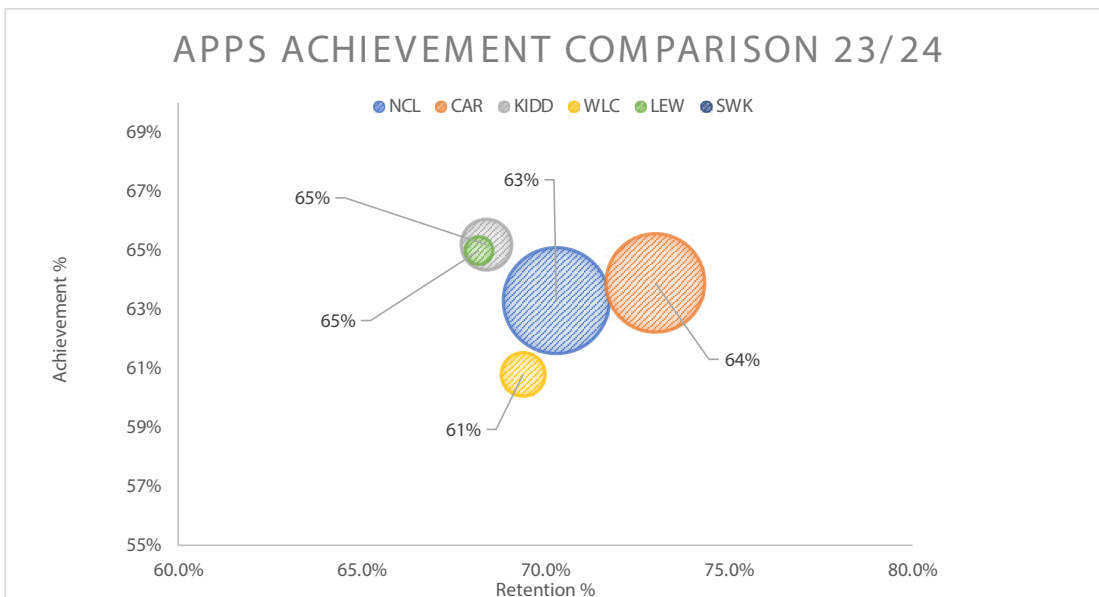
NCG's apprenticeship provision is now comprised almost entirely of standards, as a tiny minority of frameworks are now phased out. As a result, the NCG achievement rate for standards is also 64%. It is 63% for younger apprentices aged to 23, and 71% for apprentices aged 24+. 87% of apprentices are now young people aged 16-23, from a historic

reliance (circa 2018) of employed adult apprentices. [At the time much of this provision was awarding competency, rather than the delivery of new skills and knowledge].

This deliberate strategic change in direction is a direct result of NCG's mission to offer social mobility and economic prosperity, and deliver only highly technical training, aligned to local needs.

Figure 3 shows the performance by college. With the largest number of standards, the NCG rate is heavily influenced by the Newcastle College rate of 63% achievement. Kidderminster College marginally leads the table, at 65%, just ahead of Carlisle College are at 64%. There are smaller cohorts at Lewisham College (65%), West Lancashire College (61%) and the run out at Southwark College (100%) makes up the remaining provision.

Given the proportion of longer duration apprenticeships at NCG, and the proportion of standards in sectors with very low national achievement rates, such as construction, NCG's rates are now relatively good.





## Destination Data

The sustained destinations of learners, i.e. learners progressing to higher education, employment, apprenticeships, and further education and staying there for at least 6 months, is a headline KPI at NCG. The data below excludes HE destinations, as it covers the ESFA-funded provision.

'A total of 17,653 learners were approached to take part in the survey and ILR merge. The Survey was completed by 12,749 respondents giving a response rate of 72%.

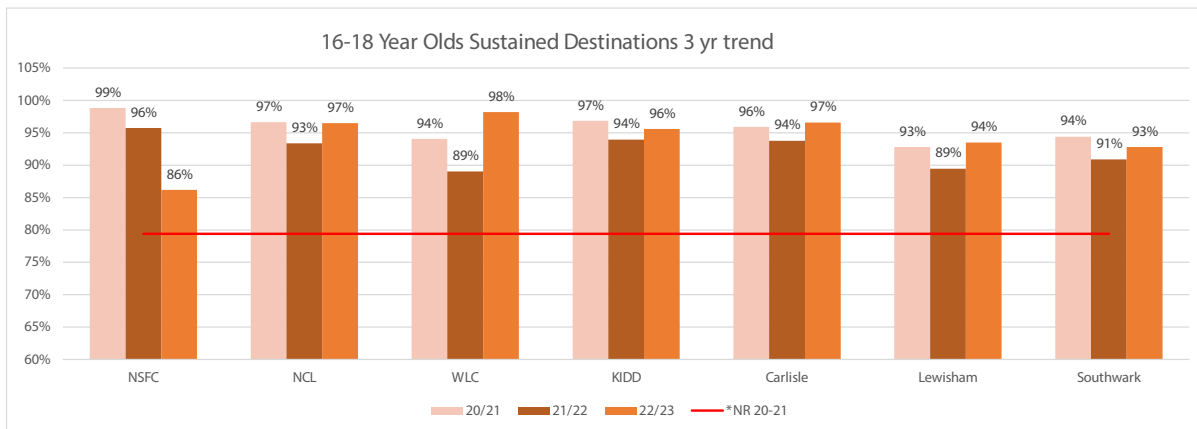
The survey was undertaken by a specialist third party (QDP) to provide independence and consistent analysis in the compiling of results.

The sustained sector destination, i.e. the successful progression of learners into their areas of study, was collected for the fifth year, alongside apprenticeship destinations. The rate was 93% overall, a 2point improvement in the last year. The rate was higher for younger learners at 95%. There were no significant differences based on

sex, learning difficulty or disability, high needs, or care experiences. There were however some ethnicity gaps, which requires inter-sectional, contextual analysis, and is best used as part of departmental and course review and evaluation.

Destination data can be viewed through several filters and is shown here for 16-18 year old learners (fig 4), adult learners on long substantial courses (fig 5), and apprentices (fig 6).

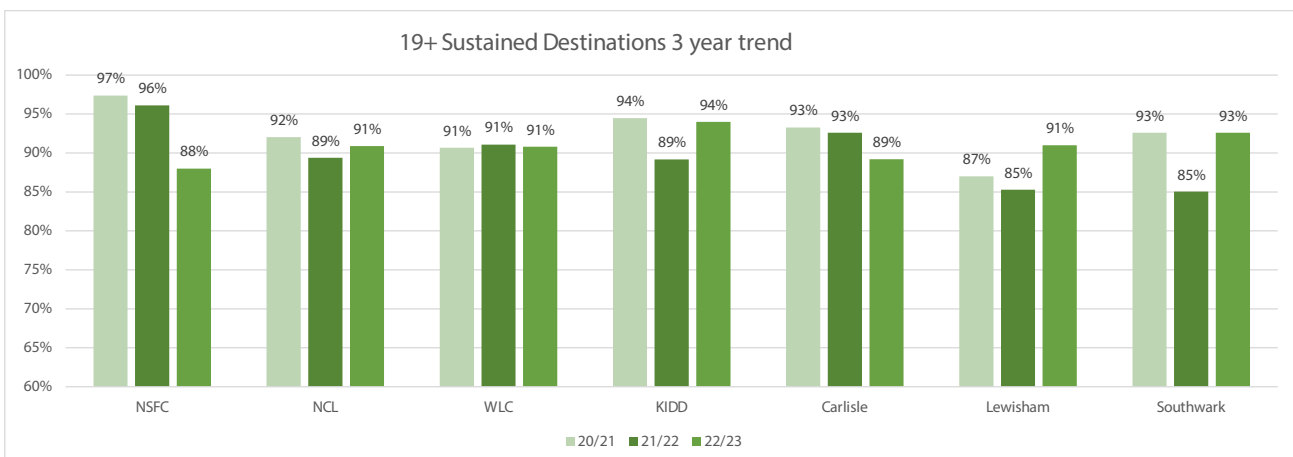
**Figure 4 - 16-18 Year Olds Sustained Destinations for learners who finished in 22/23**



Headline data indicates a rate of 93% sustained positive destinations for 2022/23 leavers. The rate for education and training is 93% (16-18 rate at 95%, and 19+ rate at 90%).

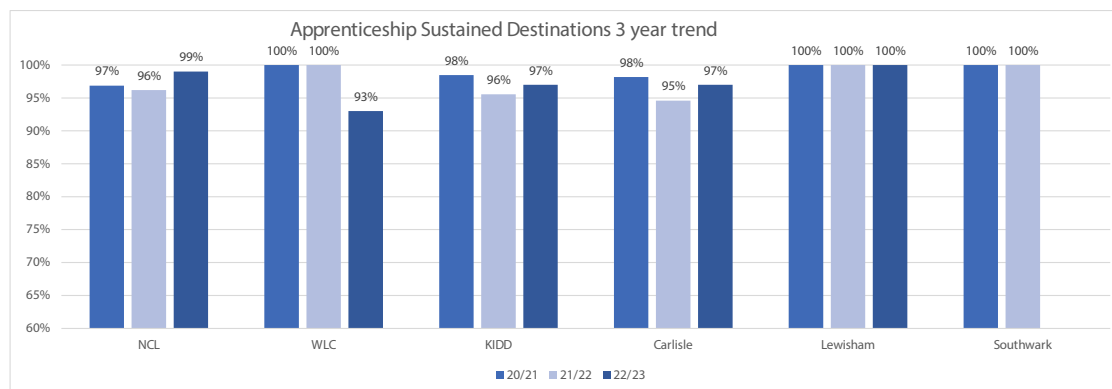
The apprenticeship rate is 98%. There is strong progression at NSFC with 86% of learners progressed to university, of which 90% secured their first choice offer.

**Figure 5 - 19+ Sustained Destinations for learners who finished in 22/23**





**Figure 6 - Apprenticeship Sustained Destinations for learners who finished in 22/23**



## Learner Voice

In addition to the destination surveys, the views of learners are gathered at various points throughout the year. Large surveys are employed to take 'temperature checks' at induction, at the end of the first term,

and toward the end of the academic year. Apprentices and employers are surveyed at the mid-year point. The headline satisfaction results are included in the scorecard on page 15.

A small decline to the headline satisfaction rates has been observed in the past year, although the rates are in line with 2019 satisfaction rates - the last survey before the pandemic.

## Academic Performance – A Levels at Newcastle Sixth Form College

Learners at the College make 'expected progress' (ALPS 4), pleasingly the metric has improved by one ALPS metric in last year, and the College is making steady progress to return to the 'excellent progress' (ALPS3) reported in 2019.

Learners arriving at the College in September 2022 (and leaving in 2024) had sat GCSE examinations with a number of adjustments. This was aimed at providing a fair process, following the disrupted home study experiences in the pandemic.

It means that their entry attainment will have benefited from a residual amount of grade 'generosity'. The

return to 2019 grade boundaries in 2024 means any generosity provided, would perhaps show as a small gap between their targeted attainment, and actual attainment (A Level grade). In lay terms, for some learners it is the difference between being predicted a generous grade A, and achieving grade B i.e. the adjusted GCSE attainment may have predicted a B in the first place.

This could impact some university offers, however generally good performance, combined with some fortune due to reduced offers in the higher education sector (partly due to the limitations of international study visas), has resulted in strong

progression. 86% of learners progressed to university, of which 90% secured their first choice offer.

The overall A-E pass rate is the highest since the return of exams in 2022, and the percentage of students achieving A/A\* grades is the highest recorded at the College. The pass rates at key grades intervals are improving, and the gap to national averages is closing. This is pleasing given the inclusive nature of the College, where on average learners arrive with 6.06 entry points (roughly somewhere between a GCSE grade 5 and grade 6).

## NCG Progress Measures for Vocational Courses

Due to the lack of availability from published DfE data, the Group is now using eTrackr to set and monitor attainment targets, based on a commonly agreed criterion. In the majority of cases, historic DfE data is built into eTrackr algorithms.

This is used to consistently set challenging initial target grades

(ITGs); aspirational target grades (ATGs) are set personally by the course leader and are agreed by the learner (these are generally set above the challenging ITG target).

The data is bespoke to NCG, and comparison with national is therefore not possible. Around 60% of learners at NCG are gaining their ITGs. The

proportion meeting ITG is highest at Lewisham College, Kidderminster College, Southwark, West Lancashire College and Lewisham College for young people.

Shorter adult provision tends to use bespoke personal development and outcome targets, which are not aggregated centrally.

## Learners with High Needs, approx. 1% of NCG's ESFA-funded provision by headcount

High needs learners are defined as young people aged 16 to 25 with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who require additional support to help them progress and achieve. Learners will receive additional funding for support, from specialist staff providing education, health and care services. In 2023/24 NCG had 715 high needs learners (rising from 704 in 2022/23). In total there were 2115 learning aims delivered.

The overall achievement rate, at 87% is a small increase on the year previous and a point higher than the NCG overall achievement rate. This follows a general trend, both at NCG and in the sector.

Whilst most colleges are around the

NCG average, Newcastle College are notably higher, whilst Carlisle College is around 7 points below. We have seen this variation before and it tends to relate to the level and provision being offered.

Learners aged 16-18 had a retention rate of 95% and an achievement rate of 85% (both improving on the year previous).

The 19-25 adult rate was 96% retention and 90% achievement (both consistent with the previous year).

Achievement is variable based on provision type and tends to be higher on Non-regulated provision, diplomas, awards, and certificates.

There has been a significant 10point increase in the diploma achievement rates in the last year. English and maths aims are broadly similar to their non-HN peers (within a few percentage points).

The gender gap has closed to just 0.5points and has again flipped, this year in favour of females. The 4point gender gap observed in 2021/22 has consistently closed and been negated.

36 HN needs learners, were identified, who were also care experienced. The achievement rate for these learners was just 2points lower than their HN peers. This gap has closed by 15points in the last year.



## A Note on our Subcontractor Partners

The volume of subcontractor partnerships continues to be tightly managed by NCG's leaders and managers, and partnership are now only commissioned where there is alignment with college curriculum strategies, accountability statements and EDIB strategy for widening participation. As such most provision is associated with employability-based provision, online up/reskilling provision for adults, or enrichment specialists for younger learners.

Most subcontracting is based at West Lancashire College with three long-standing and reputable partners. There are sizable cohorts at Newcastle College, Carlisle College, Lewisham College and Kidderminster College.

Note: the QAR data associated with

subcontracting is skewed by a peculiar audit rule that require the entire aim to be coded to partners, even when they only deliver enrichment hours. This applies to the sporting clubs involved at Newcastle College (Newcastle United, Newcastle Falcons, Newcastle Eagles), Kidderminster College, (Kidderminster Harriers), and Lewisham College (Millwall FC)

On-boarding of contractors is supported by NCG professional services who facilitate the formalised subcontractor management framework.

As a result there were 3437 aims in 2023/24. The achievement rate, at 89%, was marginally lower than the 90% rate in 2022/23.

The largest NCG partner is Learning

Curve (82% achievement, 1201 aims). They are followed by Castleview Training (99%, 473 short aims), The Skills Network (94% achievement, 228 aims), and Ken Bate Ltd.(93%, 151 aims)

NCG does not subcontract any apprenticeship delivery.

All subcontracting providers are graded 'good' by Ofsted, with the exception of Logistics Skills who were graded 'outstanding' in 2024.

At the time of writing, leaders are expecting further reductions in the proportion of subcontracted aims in 2024/25, without securing additional grant funding. This is due to the need to concentrate funding on predicted growth in college-based provision.

## Narrowing the Gap – a Note on Equalities

Leaders at NCG pay close attention to the variation within attendance retention, progress and achievement based on a number of learner characteristic groups.

The achievement data suggests that most groups have improved in line with NCG headline rates, and many gaps are closing; a few areas of note:

Achievement rates for young people with a learning difficulty/disability, high needs, care experienced learners, and learners in receipt of free meals have all improved by one or two percentage points. Learner receiving the bursary remain the same.

Achievement for these groups remains marginally below a rising 16-18 average. The care experienced group is around 2points lower than average. There was also a significant rise in the number who self declared in 2023/24. There is an ongoing focus at NCG via a dedicated CES Community of Practice, working with the Covenant and building

on the NNECL quality mark achieved in 2022/23.

In terms of young people, and ethnicity, NCG is a very diverse cohort, around one third of the aims delivered are to non White- British ethnicities.

Whilst most ethnicity groups achieve within a few points of the mean, there are some 'outliers' Learners who identify with a Caribbean ethnicity are 5points below average (although the gap has closed by 3points in the last year), learners identifying as Other/ Mixed Ethnicity perform around 7 points below the NCG average.

Analysis indicates that the small single point gap between young female and male learners last year, has flipped, and narrowed slightly.

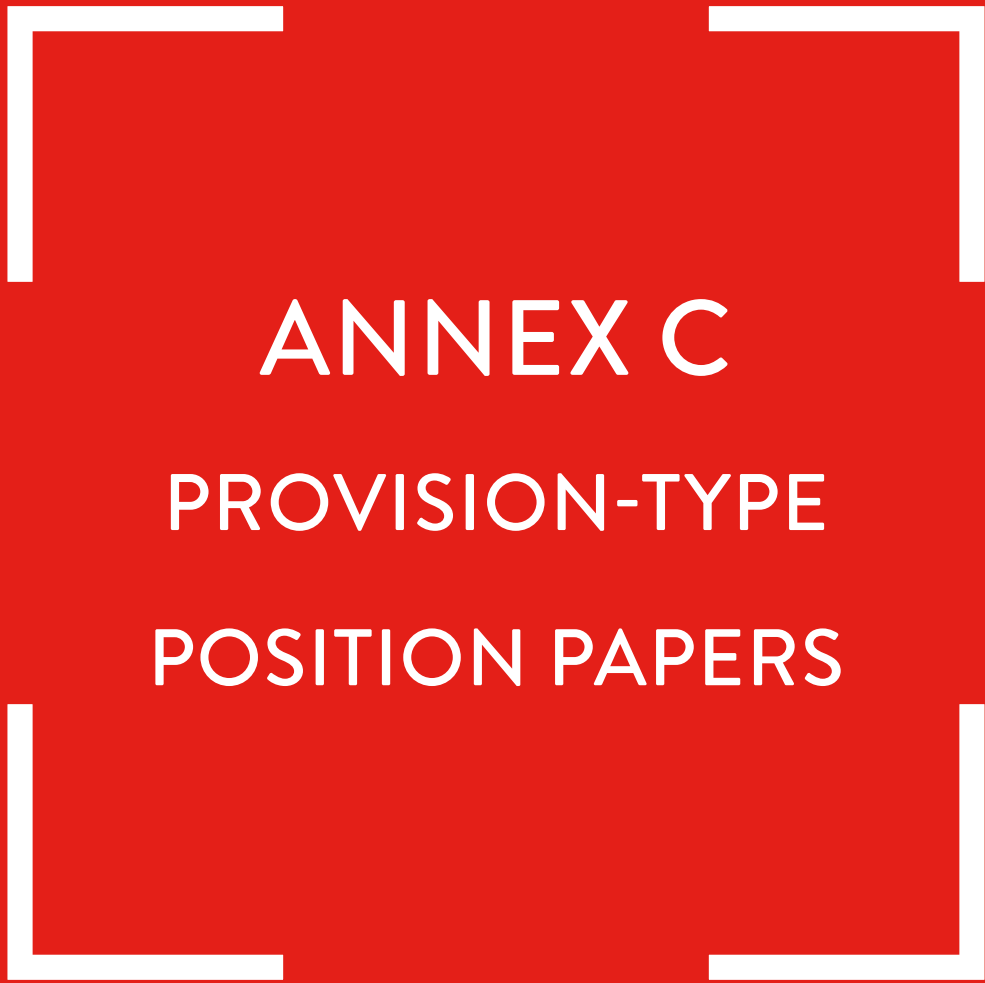
There is a clear regression of achievement for young people, as deprivation ward increases. The gap in achievement between learners from the most and least deprived

wards was around 5 points, but has closed by 3points in the last year. This relationship does not exist for adult learners, who broadly achieve within a few points of the mean.

In adult provision, the majority of the provision is non-White-British (around 72% of adult learning aims). There is very little variation in the achievement outcomes based on ethnicity. The variation in outcomes is related to course duration, rather than ethnicity.

There are no statistically significant differences between groups of adult learners based on educational and /or disability needs. All groups perform well - adult learners with high needs perform have very high achievement.

\*Please note the ethnicity categories are set by the DfE in the ILR. The fields and descriptions make it easy to confuse ethnicity with nationality, without due care. For example many non-White British learners, may in fact, still be British!



# ANNEX C

PROVISION-TYPE

POSITION PAPERS

# QUALITY OF EDUCATION: EDUCATION PROGRAMMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE - GOOD

Education programme for Young People at NCG are good, with examples of very strong personal development. Programmes are designed with the participation of dozens of local employers, stakeholder partners to ensure that the provision is aligned to the aspirations of the learners, and the needs of the community and regions served by NCG's colleges.

Outcomes for learners (achievement and retention) are on a 3year trajectory of improvement; achievement outcomes on main aims such as diplomas and certificates are above average.

Destination surveys would indicate that the vast majority (95%) of young people proceed to sustained, positive destinations with around three quarters continuing into further education, and the rest progressing to higher education, work, or apprenticeships. Learners on A Level provision make their expected progress with the majority securing their first choice offers at university. This is notable given the inclusive cohort at Newcastle Sixth Form that is intended to widen participation, and encourage aspiration to join university.

Like many FES providers, NCG is working conscientiously to return very modest outcome gains in English and maths. The Group overall is marginally above the low national comparators, however high pass outcomes in several colleges are not yet meeting target expectations. This is despite sustained effort in attendance management, moderating assessments standards, and facilitating huge exam series in all colleges. That said there is important context: learners at Lewisham College, Southwark College, and Kidderminster College arrive with some of the lowest entry attainment of the English FES colleges (source MIDES). The London colleges therefore return some

commendable distance travelled, from very low-entry-attainment starting points. Outcomes in the Newcastle colleges are relatively stable, whilst Carlisle College has returned recent improvement, but has experienced challenges with maths basic skills. The Group will continue to search for an approach that best suits our mission, through the revisiting of our philosophy and curriculum intent, alongside quality improvement actions in 2024/25 to further strengthen consistency in cohort attendance management, and delivery standards. NCG will also use its position on various sector clusters to lobby for change in the condition of funding, to find a solution that better suits our young people.

Personal development at the Group is a source of emerging pride, there are many superb examples of enrichment and community partnerships in all colleges. Careers advice is well embedded and plays a significant role in helping to underpin excellent destination rates. The NCG Guarantee is seeking to ensure that all learners have access to enterprise inductions, support for mental fitness, and access to skills competitions and social action. This programme involves providers such as Loudspeaker and Unloc to further enhance the delivery and help build learner confidence. As a result, learner feedback through large-scale survey, or through focus groups or visits to classrooms is consistently strong. Learners frequently have access to extra-curricular, or super curricular activities to enhance their learning – for most this would involve the use of local visits and guest masterclass speakers; however for a significant minority this has extended to participation in NCG's student leadership programme, NCG Skills, and international learning visits. There are numerous examples of learners participating in life changing trips and visits for example in Newcastle College, learners went on 14 international trips to St

Lucia, South Africa, Malta, Italy, Netherlands, Belgium and Spain funded by the Turing Scheme. At West Lancashire College nearly 70 learners engaged with work experience and industry placements in Cyprus, Malta and Vienna, The NCG Guarantee is now working to ensure that more learners experience in such superb opportunities, to ensure everyone has entitlement to something local, national, or international.

The behaviour and attitudes of young people, across all NCG colleges is very good, and often excellent. Learners attend well to the main aims, behave respectfully to one another, and work very hard to attain their technical, academic, and applied goals.

Behaviour around campus is often noted to be of a very high standards - for example at Newcastle College, the integration of a large adult and HE offer brings a maturity to the campus, that makes it feel more like a university; yet all colleges experience a high standard of conduct, thanks to the combined efforts of staff.

Occasional issues associated with conduct that falls below standard is dealt fairly through NCG's policy framework for attendance, and/or positive behaviour. This includes the minority of learners who do not attend well for their English and maths sessions, which is an source of frustration for leaders and teachers. Leaders are also concerned around the extent by which young people have taken-up of vaping. The measures taken by the new government to ban disposable vape products can not come soon enough, and in the meantime teachers will continue to integrate content into tutorials .

# QUALITY OF EDUCATION:

## EDUCATION PROGRAMMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE - GOOD- CONT.

Most course leaders actively seek out meaningful participation from expert industry professionals to enhance the learner experience. For example, at Newcastle College, all programmes of study are endorsed by employers, and there are naturally occurring examples in business, engineering, construction and health. In the digital and creative sector is sponsored by an employer who engages with the learners at least once each term, whilst in hospitality learners benefit from internal competitions, judged by industry professionals in their real working environments, as a result learners have excelled in regional and national competitions. At West Lancashire College, several engineering employers have influenced sequencing, content and assessment methods used, they also provide equipment of industry standard for learners to develop and practise their skills, and provide professional updating to staff to ensure they are up to current industry standards.

Teachers use their expert knowledge for considered planning, involving expert colleagues or stakeholders to develop a sequenced, logical, and challenging scheme of delivery. Teachers engage in continuous professional development at all colleges, and this often involves the participation of stakeholder partners, masterclass speakers, in addition to participation from centralised NCG practitioners, and occasional online masterclass sessions, for example with Dylan Williams on assessment.

NCG's teachers understand their learners well. Teachers are often role models who promote and routinely demonstrate and embody academic and technical professional standards, and thereby raise the aspirations of their students so that they are committed to their sector specific future and are ready to go further and higher. This work is often supported by careers professionals, and personal development coaches/mentors – the net result is consistently high progression to further education, higher education, and employment. Teachers have frequently travelled the same path of their learners, through A Level, vocational qualification, higher education, and apprenticeships, and this helps provide advice, guidance, and application of industry and academic standards.

The quality of delivery is holistically viewed to be secure, and NCG has very recently introduced a new Quality Plan, with a limited set of professional standards, derived from ETF, DfE and UKPFS. This intended to bring about even more consistency in the evaluation and professional development provided to teachers. There are excellent examples of strong teacher exposition and delivery in all colleges

Teachers often use considered assessment strategies, with skilful questioning techniques and/or pacy activities are in place to check the attainment of skills and knowledge and address misconceptions.

In the best sessions, the assessment is varied, dynamic and responsive, and the use of competitions for assessment is becoming more prevalent, from a standing start a few years ago. NCG Skills is an opportunity for learners and apprentices to compete locally, and then nationally at annual NCG event. This is now resulting in demonstrable growth associated with WorldSkills participation. College and Group-based practitioner support has focused on assessment for learning over the last year, and this theme continues to underpin continuous improvement. Specifically this relates to the tendency to front-load assessment, or rely on milestone activity, rather than exploit other opportunities and methods. Work scrutiny occasionally indicates that there is room for improvement in the consistent structuring of learner notes to aid recall and revision. This is a theme of one of NCG's teaching standards and will be an ongoing focus in 2024/25.

Students frequently demonstrate or display evidence of sustained progress in class, and outcomes would indicate that, on average, learners make their expected progress. Work scrutiny and deep dives has focused on what learners know, and can do, as a result of their time at NCG, and pleasingly there are naturally occurring examples of good practice in the vast majority of visits. Again the NCG standards will continue to remedy the residual inconsistencies.

# QUALITY OF EDUCATION: ADULT LEARNING PROGRAMMES - GOOD

Adult Learning programmes at NCG are good, with occasional examples of excellence. Programmes are designed with participation from many local agencies and stakeholders to offer meaningful progress for NCG's adult learners. This has demonstrable success, with 90% of completers in the previous year (2022/23) remaining in positive destinations around 10 months after completing. Of this total, around a quarter progressed to higher education, around a half progressed to FE, and 15% progressed into work or apprenticeships. Adult learners on all provision types yield high outcome rates. Overall NCG has an achievement rate of 88% and a retention rate of 93%; of note is the fact that only one fifth of NCG's provision are 'very short' courses. Excluding these courses, NCG still has a high achievement rate of 87%, and a retention rate of 92%. Of this more substantial provision the achievement rates for ESOL, certificates, diplomas and awards are very good. Access to HE achievement is also above average. Leaders at Southwark College now believe their provision is 'outstanding', whilst leaders in Newcastle College believe the provision is very strong.

Most course leaders actively seek out meaningful participation from expert industry professionals to enhance the learner experience. For example, the frequent engagement of Combined Authorities, Enterprise Agencies, Job Centre Plus, NHS Trusts and regional employers and clusters. At Lewisham College there are strong links with Transport for London to co-design employability courses, whilst at Newcastle College there are links with the several combined authorities and the North East Chamber. This collaboration helps ensure appropriate courses design for adults seeking employment, and for supporting the ESOL and basic skills of several city regions and towns with relatively high levels of deprivation, or the need to cater for the needs of refugee and asylum seekers. The provision of online learning courses at West Lancashire

College is also a result of market demand from learner stakeholders, to undertake career learning, to fit around the demands of life and work.

Teachers use their expert knowledge for considered planning, involving expert colleagues or stakeholders to develop a sequenced, logical, and challenging scheme of delivery. Teachers often engage in continuous professional development, for example at Newcastle College, teachers at the Energy Academy have worked with local employers to support training for teachers on the most up to date techniques, whilst plumbing staff maintain their gas safe accreditations. Evaluations of teaching and learning indicate that the vast majority of teachers plan conscientiously, based on the next steps and intended destinations of their learners.

NCG's teachers understand their learners well and often have to deal with issues relating to social, employment or relocation – this will often result in interpersonal support and guidance that goes beyond the requirements of the curriculum. Teachers are frequently role models for their learners, they promote and routinely demonstrate compassion, care and professional standards to raise the aspirations of their learners. Many learners in ESOL provision are new to the UK, and teachers in all colleges frequently go the extra mile to support their specific language and skills needs. This is the case in all colleges who deliver ESOL, and also Access to HE courses, in their community.

A climate of high expectations, trust, and respect is evident in the vast majority of provision – this leads to high expectations and outcomes. Outcomes are particularly high in Lewisham College, Newcastle College, Southwark College, and in online learning at West Lancashire College, whilst diploma, certificate, awards and Access outcomes are high at Carlisle College. There are routine episodes of competent explicit direct instruction, demonstration, and/or coaching to

introduce new skills and knowledge to the learners. For example, the modelling of language in ESOL in Lewisham College and Southwark College, the demonstration of formulae in GCSE mathematics at Newcastle College, and in basic skills English at Kidderminster College, alongside the development of employer-ready skills in shorter aims at Lewisham College and Southwark College.

Teacher direction is essential in building knowledge and skills from starting points, based on initial formative assessment. Tasks are mindful of students' needs to ensure stretch and challenge at the given success criteria over time. Need examples.

Teachers often use considered assessment strategies, with skilful questioning techniques and/or pacey activities are in place to systematically check the attainment of skills and knowledge and address misconceptions. This supports the development of long-term memory, whilst monitoring the development of work-ready behaviours. This is most evident in example, but needs to improve in some areas of basic skills and GCSE delivery. At Newcastle College ESOL teachers use very regular formative assessment, differentiated to the needs of the learners, to ensure they make rapid progress through their qualification and as a result the large majority of learners pass and progress to their next steps.

Most students demonstrate or display evidence of rapid and sustained progress. They produce work of a high standard. This is evident in teaching assistant, health and electrical courses at Lewisham College; throughout the service industries, and digital, provision at Newcastle College, and in IT and networking, and cabin crew courses at Southwark College. In all cases learning is applied to employer-ready skills aligned to industry standards.

# QUALITY OF EDUCATION: PROVISION FOR LEARNERS WITH HIGH NEED - GOOD

The provision for learners with high needs at NCG is good, and very occasionally outstanding.

The Group is currently transitioning to a number of agreed professional standards to bring even more consistency to the embedded mainstream delivery, and to more fluently articulate excellence. Outcomes for learners with high needs are secure in all colleges. At the headline level around 87% of high needs-funded learners achieved (1 point higher than the NCG achievement rate). Progress to sustained positive destinations is high at 93%. Most learners continue on to further education (around 83%), 6% progress to Higher Education, and 2% progress into apprenticeships.

The vast majority of learners take part in individualised, well planned and implemented transition processes prior to enrolment. This ensures that learners are familiar with the environment and are sufficiently confident to engage with their new course of study at college. This is particularly strong at Southwark College, where learners are invited to the college at least twice, before attending a Transition Day to meet their peers, teaching and support staff. At West Lancashire College all High Needs Learners and a majority of SEND learners receive early contact from the team to identify their needs prior to course start. This gives learners increased assurance and confidence of the college's ability to meet their support needs effectively and enables us to support a smooth transition into the college. In some cases, learners with support needs present for enrolment late in the enrolment window, and teams work hard to accommodate and support their requirements.

Learners receive appropriate, high-quality support during induction, which subsequently enables them to settle into their course, department and college quickly.

Learners with high needs have an assigned point of contact. The Access Hub at Newcastle College provides support to ensure that all students with access needs have the opportunity to benefit from an inclusive learning environment and education regardless of their support need and or disability. The Hub assists students to develop their independence and academic achievement in a comprehensive and safe setting. There is also strong practice at Kidderminster College where effective arrangements for EHCP annual reviews ensure that SEN learners are actively involved in developing provision in the spirit of co-production – this is to ensure the provision reflects their perspectives on what constitutes an outstanding student experience. For example, parents (and local authority officers) are routinely invited to attend annual reviews and encouraged to provide feedback as to their child's progress and how this is developing 'at home' skills such as independence and resilience. This information is then triangulated with the views of the learner and used to inform the annual review and make suggested amendments to overall outcomes sought as well as support required in order to make successful transition to the next programme or phase of progression for example to employment or higher learning. At Southwark College, the in-class support, (LSA) and external wrap round support from the Transition Coordinator, (who helps students transition from the school learning environment to the college learning environment), as well as two college counsellors, access to SALT along with the introduction of the college nurse.

Learners receive inclusive, high-quality support from knowledgeable and well trained staff, in line with their learning needs. They can generally articulate their progress towards targets, including Education Health

Care Plan (EHCP) outcomes. The Group has a high degree of expertise in the delivery of High Needs, and this is most evidence in Newcastle College, and in Kidderminster College. A senior leader at Kidderminster College has a Group-wide role for developing the Group's High Needs provision, working with expert colleagues across the Group, knowledge is particularly strong at Newcastle College. Also, at Newcastle College integrated TLA activity takes place for all classroom support staff. Dedicated coaching expertise has seen continuous improvement in the quality of TLA. As a result, the majority of managers make effective judgements of TLA, and are able to address any areas of continuous improvement during the year.

Learners at all colleges receive high quality learning and wellbeing support which is in line with the needs identified in their support plan, delivered by a team of well trained and knowledgeable staff who know the learners. EHCP outcomes follow agreed procedures, and leaders work proactively with local authorities to try and ensure annual reviews are coordinated, and take place. Plans are reviewed on a regular basis and most SEN learners can articulate their progress towards EHCP outcomes and individual targets. For example, at Kidderminster College, feedback from Worcestershire Children's First has reported that staff provide 'excellent' quality in annual review processes, through a thorough process of questioning and active listening to all parties (learner, parents and local authority officers), are creating well-informed suggested amendments to Preparation for Adulthood outcomes. A recent Ofsted inspection at Lewisham Local Authority also praised the learners' knowledge and skills, independence, and confidence. At Southwark



# QUALITY OF EDUCATION: PROVISION FOR LEARNERS WITH HIGH NEED - CONTINUED

College, learners are given the opportunity to develop their targets through goal directed activities that take place off site – they are subsequently given the opportunity to safely develop their travel training skills through exploration of their local area, though learning how to safely use local transport.

Work is currently underway to further ensure that those learners with less profound needs are embedded into mainstream courses, and teachers of these courses have a holistic understanding of the learners' ECHP outcomes, in addition to their academic targets. This aspect continues to require strengthening, and will be a focus of NCG's Quality Plan standards from 2024/25 onwards.

Issues with punctuality and attendance are swiftly and collaboratively addressed, considering the individual needs and barriers to learning experienced by the learner. Parents, Carers, and external partners are fully involved in the learner journey and work with the college to address issues which may impact on the experience and achievement of learners. At all colleges issues with punctuality and attendance of High Needs and SEND learners are collaboratively and swiftly addressed by Course Leaders, Heads of Department and the support teams across the college in the majority of cases, resulting in a high retention level for High Needs Learners. Action-response includes a range of measures, such as action planning, additional academic support, regular wellbeing checks and meetings, small group or 1:1 support for English and/or maths elements of the programme, referrals to external agencies, invitation to lunch clubs. The learners' needs are conscientiously considered, and inclusion plans are updated to reflect any changes. Punctuality at Lewisham College requires further improvement.

Learners receive high quality advice and guidance on their next steps and are supported to enable them to access these opportunities. Learners will be supported in developing skills to help them prepare for their next steps, including work and independent living. At Newcastle College, The Life Skill Hub provides sessions around independent living, cookery and financial skills, extending to money management, laundry skills and employability, and resilience building. Kidderminster College has strong/good practice in this for example learners are supported in developing preparation for adulthood skills including work and independent living. Feedback from Worcestershire Children's First confirms that College staff chair well prepared meetings for the annual review, considering all stakeholder views including teaching staff, support staff, parents, local authority officers and the learner. Southwark College has strong/good practice in this young people are given the opportunity to experience a variety of work experience placements. The work experience placements have been in the Marriott Hotel, Tapestry Media, Sense Charity. In addition to this we have strong links with local organisations such as St John's church, Waterloo. We run a successful Supported Internships Programme, where last year we were able to get 90% of young people into paid employment. At West Lancashire College, a tutorial and enrichment process introduces career planning and learners record their aspirations and goals during the first weeks of their programme. The tutorial and enrichment programmes which form part of the programme of study enable learners to develop skills associated with independent living and prepares them to be a positive member of their communities and society.

Learners occasionally, but not yet systematically, take part in meaningful work readiness activities to prepare

them for the world of work or further study and move into positive and sustained destinations, in some cases through the use of supported internships. The Group aspires to increase the proportion of learners accessing post-FE paid internships, apprenticeships and is in the early stages of developing specific work-related learning (foundation apprenticeship programmes) to widen participation further.

Learners are represented in student voice activities to ensure the provision reflects their perspectives on what constitutes a successful learner experience. Selecting the learners for this activity is a balance of promoting confidence and self-assurance, and understanding their specific needs and current abilities - providing the learners with the support and encouragement here is an ongoing action for delivery teams.

The Group undertakes large scale surveys, which include learners from across all provisions, whilst at Newcastle College learners believe the support offer is well publicised from initial application right through the student journey and as a result, the vast majority of FE students (92%) reported in the first 'roving reporter' survey that they knew who to contact if they needed support, and what was on offer. Also a High Needs Student Voice Group has been working alongside Newcastle City Council's SEND Voice team who are rolling out the Your Voice Matters networks. The group helped design the first network event which was based in the college library. At West Lancashire College, learners form a key part of the student ambassador team, with support from programme leaders, and a college board member.

# QUALITY OF EDUCATION: APPRENTICESHIPS - GOOD

The quality of apprenticeship provision is good.

College leaders and training staff have successfully consolidated the curriculum around 30 IfATE standards, which are aligned to local employer need, and the demonstrable resources and expertise of staff. This period of consolidation (termed 'reduce to produce' at NCG) has resulted in the removal of lower quality provision whilst improving administration, compliance, and the quality of training. As a result of this action, the provision has pivoted to one that predominantly supports young people aged 16-23

87% of apprentices are now young people aged 16-23, from a historic reliance (circa 2018) of employed adult apprentices, much of which was often competency awarding of existing skills, rather than the delivery of new skills and knowledge.

NCG's delivery is based around a simple model: right apprentice > right employer > right standard > and right delivery. This is reflected in the NCG Quality Plan standards used to evaluate the provision, alongside the previously stated teaching and training standards. The subject approval process is governed by NCG's Apprenticeship Council with delegated rights from the Executive FE Academic Board. College leads must assure their peers of a number of key aspects before a standard is approved to run at the respective college. This includes demonstrable employer demand and pledges, resources, staffing, delivery method, and contribution to overhead. Delivery at NCG is required to be day, block, front-loaded, or synchronous online. In practice, just about all apprentices at NCG now physically attend College and in doing so, we have ensured opportunities exist to facilitate peer interaction, socialisation, and welfare/safeguarding work.

NCG's partner employers are selected with integrity to support the apprenticeships standards approved to run at each college. For example at

Newcastle College, Carlisle College, Kidderminster College and West Lancashire College employers must attend in person for on-boarding tutorials. In doing so, college leaders seek to ensure early commitment from employers. Furthermore by raising the entry requirements leaders have improved the status and prestige of apprenticeships. A facility remains for course leaders to request flexibilities should an apprentice demonstrate significant aptitude, attitude, or has narrowly missed a good GCSE pass. Furthermore project work has explored the provision of routes for learners with more profound difficulties. NCG has aspirations to significantly increase the proportion of apprentices who are drawn from under-represented groups. It is too early to evaluate the impact of this aim.

Improving retention is also a direct result of this improvement action; alongside positive apprentice views. Outcomes have been above a low national average for the past 2 years, and are climbing.

Most apprentices receive good quality technical delivery, based on agreed delivery plans. Teachers and trainers (delivery teams) frequently use their subject expertise to ensure that sessions adds value. There are good examples in all colleges. However there still exists very occasional episodes of 'theory sessions' that are too focused on collating evidence or writing log accounts, rather than deepening or expanding knowledge and skills. These will continue to be challenged and removed by NCG and college leaders.

The introduction of an e-portfolio over the past few years has enabled apprentices to take responsibility to help manage their learning records, promote ownership of their learning, and improve compliance.

The quality of apprenticeship progress reviews are improving as a result of training and process improvement, following introduction of the e-portfolio. When completed to expectations, progress reviews form essential

opportunities to check wellbeing, career flightpaths progression, and the attainment of knowledge, skills, and behaviours. The employer and apprentice are active participants. There are no, or very limited, delays in conducting these reviews.

Leaders and delivery team are increasingly conscientious in maintaining compliant records, as identified in the NCG Apprenticeship Handbook. The number of apprentices who enter EPA Gateway on time, and go on to achieve within a reasonable timeframe, continues to increase. Conversely the number of breaks and out of funding apprentices has decreased markedly, and headcount volumes are now at tolerable levels.

Teacher and trainers have engaged well with grassroots skills competitions, such as NCG Skills. This activity remains an important aspect of the apprenticeship improvement plan, and NCG Guarantee, as learners and apprentices can test their skills and knowledge under time and competitive pressures. Increasing numbers of apprentices are progressing to regional WorldSkills feeders. For example the number on 2024 entries has doubled to around 350. The WorldSkills Centre of Excellence status has created a number of staff opportunities to engage as 'educators' and thereby ensure that training practices are in line with international expectations. Together this is helping to ensure apprentices arrive at EPA prepared, skilled, and confident, ready to achieve good passes, first time.

In 2023/24 around a third of apprentices attained 'high grades' in their end point assessment. The rate is very high (above 80%) in Digital Professional, Customer Service, Laboratory Technician, Network Engineering, Engineering Operative, Business Administration, and the first Plumbing apprentices to undertake EPA. The rate in hairdressing is low, which is surprising given the commitment to skills competitions. We will therefore continue to monitor and benchmark our own performance.

# QUALITY OF EDUCATION: T-LEVELS - NO SAR JUDGEMENT IN YEAR 1(PAGE 1/2)

Despite being a fraction of the NCG's level 3 provision in 2023/24, this extended summary is included due to the importance of this national reform on NCG's medium term curriculum strategy.

NCG Commenced delivery of T Levels in September 2023, following a year of validation, planning, and exploring good practice in the FE sector. There were 167 starts on 8 T level subjects of which 95% had been retained at R12 at the end of year 12 (2023/24) – over half of the pathways are at Newcastle College. The standards being offered in this first year are: Digital Infrastructure (NCL), Digital Production (NCL, KC, SC, WLC), Digital Support (LC), Early Years (NCL, WLC), Electrotechnical (KC, NCL), Supporting Healthcare (NCL, WLC), Lab Sciences (CC, NCL). The provision is evaluated to be working toward the standards set out in the Quality Plan.

The outcomes of initial assessment to effectively inform starting points of their learners, tailor curriculum content and sequencing is not always consistent enough. In Carlisle College, outcomes of the subject assessment were effectively used to adapt sequencing in year in Lab Science, whilst at Newcastle College, initial assessment took place at the start of the programme and via mid-term mocks throughout the year. However, at West Lancashire College this caused a delay in KSBs gaps being identified and addressed early in term one.

There are examples of stakeholder engagement in all colleges and in the vast majority of provisions. For example, at Newcastle College, leaders and teachers have collaborated closely with local employers such as Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trusts, Newcastle Council, Co-Op Nurseries and NEPACS. This has resulted in support with sequencing (year 1 core), content revisions, co delivery (psychosis, safeguarding) and workplace delivery of occupational specialist content such as death and bereavement in Health; and a live dissection at the Centre of Life for Lab Science students. At Southwark College,

a local employer (Cherry Creators) has shared the software they use which has subsequently informed positioning of content delivery in Digital. Whilst at Lewisham College leaders are engaged in discussions with the Local Authority, NHS, Goldsmiths and Millwall FC to identify opportunities where they can support and further enhance T level planning, sequencing, and delivery.

The majority of teachers effectively apply their expert subject knowledge to develop schemes of learning, which are clearly sequenced and logical. In most cases, sequencing has been informed through effective collaboration with peer subject specialist. There is frequent external engagement with a range of stakeholder types. For example, reputable peer colleges (e.g. Nelson and Colne College Group), sector-based professional development opportunities (via ETF and awarding organisations), and employer advisory boards (at Newcastle College). As a result of this work, delivery models have been developed and adjusted to combine concurrent, interleaved, and consecutive topic delivery, with front loading of core content to support learners to be well prepared for their external assessments. Specific examples include at Newcastle College, where content areas have been adapted in Digital, and in Health 3 core modules have been delivered concurrently, as has examination paper content in Early Years. Teachers of Lab science at Carlisle College and Newcastle College have sequenced biology longitudinally to consistently build this technical knowledge, whilst mathematical content was adapted in-year to a discrete delivery model. At Kidderminster, the delivery plan in Electrotechnical has been amended in year to incorporate more practical workshops.

All teachers on T level programmes are professionally qualified and often have extensive industry and subject expertise. For example, in Health there are a wide range of health care professionals who are dual professionals teaching on the provision. They include registered

nurses and midwifery with specialisms in paediatric and community nursing, staff at West Lancashire College, and Newcastle Colleges remain practicing professionals via NHS bank' pools.

Delivery teams are encouraged to maintain their subject currency through wide range of professional development opportunities. This includes industrial updating, via the ETF Industry Insights programme, ETF/AoC hosted webinars, subject networks (e.g. Cisco) and best practice events with outstanding colleges (including Barnsley College and EKC Group).

T level teachers and course leaders have benefited from NCG-led professional development aimed at reviewing and adapting their pedagogy. This included a session on formative assessment led by sector expert Dylan Williams on formative assessment. Additionally, there is emerging evidence of effective peer collaboration in year facilitated by subject communities of practice and newly appointed 'route leads' (staff with responsibility for coordinating activity). This is not yet systemic, but is evident in Lab Science (Carlisle College and Newcastle College); Digital (West Lancashire College and Southwark College) and Business (West Lancashire College and Newcastle College), where teachers have agreed consistent approaches to assessment planning and sequencing.

Summer 2024 series Core Component results are mixed and show variation by College and pathway with Early Years showing the highest grade profile, and Health the lowest. The NCG A to E pass rate is 91% for the first attempt, this is relatively strong compared to other providers in year 1. An NCG-wide resit framework will be put in place in early 2024/25 to ensure that all T level learners are required to resit their exams with the aim of attaining their target core grades, based on their qualifications on entry.

# QUALITY OF EDUCATION: T-LEVELS CONTINUED (PAGE 2/2)

Route leads in each subject area have developed and collated core materials such as learning schemes, resources, road maps, and initial assessment activities. At Newcastle College, Early Years teachers spoke positively about the impact back-to-floor days in primary schools, has improved understanding of how phonics' is currently taught in primary schools, this has informed their delivery of this topic to their T level students. Lab Science, staff have benefited from 2 research scientists from Moredun Research institute who delivered a masterclass in PCR and working with NHS scientists.

Most leaders and teachers have made timely progress in securing relevant placements for their students. At West Lancashire College, T level students are also benefiting from overseas placements via the Turing Scheme. Newly developed policy and supporting documentation to support the delivery of placements has now been adopted by all colleges across the Group. Particularly good placement preparation is evident at West Lancashire College and Newcastle College who have developed a programme and resources to ensure learners are suitably prepared to enter the workplace. This has subsequently been shared as best practice across the Group via communities of practice.

Delivery design is specific to the subject and include block, staggered, and rotational models. Timetables have been adapted along with the development of MS Teams sites to host resources. Whilst the positioning of placements was considered carefully in planning the curriculum sequencing in most subject areas, this has had to be adapted in year due to local availability. This has been particularly challenging in Digital. Conscientious planning and the availability of partnerships and placements in Lab Science,

Early Years, and Health has allowed students enough time to develop sufficient core knowledge, whilst providing relatively timely access and experience to real work environments.

The majority of teachers regularly assess the progress of their learners using a range of formative assessment methods checking for attainment and retention of technical knowledge and skills including, skilful questioning and retrieval practice via low stakes quizzes and more formally via topic tests and mock exams. For example, at Newcastle College exam style questions are embedded into starter and plenary of sessions to challenge learners, via with higher mark style questions, and areas learners performed least well in during mocks. They also use Padlet's to support learners with revision techniques along with simulation rooms to assess development of practical skills. Not all tutors consistently and systematically use results of formative assessment to inform individual targets. Refinement of monitoring, recording, and tracking of student progress are also areas for development to help all students make the progress/achieve what they are capable.

The further embedding of the NCG Guarantee, to drive personal development to outstanding, will be an area of focus in 2024/25. Whilst there is evidence toward the employability badge, and learner feedback indicates that most students know their options post T level, not all are fully decided upon their next steps, which will require ongoing careers support.

Finally a key risk is the recruitment and retention of high quality teachers and educators, which is a well publicised concern in the sector. NCG leaders will tackle this challenge through the strategic People Plan.

# GLOSSARY

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AR	Achievement Rate
CC	Carlisle College
CES	Care-Experienced Student
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DfE	Department for Education
ESFA	Education and Skills Funding Agency
ETF	Education and Training Foundation
ETLA	Evaluation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment
FE	Further Education
HE	Higher Education
HMI	His Majesty's Inspector
IfATE	Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education
KC	Kidderminster College
LDD	Learning Disability and/or Difficulty
LSIP	Local Skills Improvement Plan
MIS	Management Information System
NR	National Rate
NSS	National Student Survey
NNECL	National Network for the Education of Care Leavers
OfS	Office for Students
QA	Quality Assurance
QAR	Qualification Achievement Rate
QIP	Quality Improvement Plan
RI	Requires Improvement
RR	Retention Rate
SAR	Self-Assessment Report
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
TandL	Teaching and Learning
TLA	Teaching, Learning and Assessment
WLC	West Lancashire College

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