

Self-Assessment Report

August 2020 – July 2021



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Background

Juniper Training Limited (Juniper) formerly known as Carver Training was established in 1983 as a youth training centre for warehouse training. It now offers Study Programme, Traineeships (youth) and Apprenticeships.

This self-assessment report will examine the period August 2020 – July 2021 for all programmes.

2020/21 starts:

Programme	Number of starts in 2020/21	Comparison to 2019/20
Study Programme	1396	Increase of 132 learners
Traineeships (16-19 year olds)	74	Increase of 22 learners
Apprenticeships	149 Level 2 169 Level 3 28 Level 4	Increase of 50 learners Increase of 9 learners Increase of 9 learners

This report will examine the position of Juniper at the start of the contact year in August 2020 and the analysis will scrutinise the impact of changes and measure improvements made across the whole academic year. The report this year takes into account the impact of Covid-19 and the various lockdowns that occurred during this academic year.

Juniper operates from 14 sites across the West Midlands (Brierley Hill, Lichfield, Walsall, Wednesbury & Wolverhampton), East Midlands (Chesterfield, Derby and Leicester), Shropshire (Telford), Staffordshire (Hanley, Leek & Burton) and Cheshire (Stockport). Central Support Services (Head Office) is located in Featherstone, Wolverhampton. Almost all centres are based in areas of high social deprivation.

Maths prior attainment levels of learners when they started programme during 2020/21 were low.

9-4 (or equivalent)	3-1 (or equivalent)	No prior attainment	No data
19%	48%	21%	12%

English prior attainment levels of learners when they started on programme during 2020/21 were low.

9-4 (or equivalent)	3-1 (or equivalent)	No prior attainment	No data
23%	46%	19%	12%

41% of learners on Study Programme during 2020/21 were identified as having Special Educational Needs or a Disability (SEND); an increase of 1% compared to the previous year. The top 5 categories for SEND were: mental health 10%, other medical condition 9%, dyslexia 8%, social & emotional difficulties 5% and autism spectrum disorder 3%.

Of those learners on Study Programme during 2020/21, **42% of learners were assessed as eligible for bursary funding (vulnerable and discretionary)** to support with costs associated with their training, such as travel, clothing, equipment, educational visits and books. This is a decrease of 1% when compared to the previous year. **80% of all learners in receipt of vulnerable bursary were made up of those learners that were either in care or care leavers.** A full breakdown of numbers can be seen in the Free Meals and Bursary funding table:

Free Meals and Bursary Funding table based on 2020/21 starts*:

In receipt of:	Percentage	Number
Free Meals Funding	16%	224
16-19 Discretionary Bursary	32%	447
16-19 Vulnerable Bursary	7%	96
In care/care leavers in receipt of 16-19 Vulnerable Bursary	80%	52

* Study Programme, 16-19 & Adult Traineeship

Juniper employs almost 200 staff. The Management Board consists of the Chairman (no operational day-to-day involvement), the Managing Director, the Head of Operations, two Regional Heads of Performance, the Head of Business Development and the Head of Quality. They are responsible for all aspects of the company's day-to-day management, and are supported by Performance Managers at a centre level. Effective governance arrangements are in place; the AELP Code of Good Governance for Independent Learning Providers has been adopted and the performance and effectiveness of Juniper's governance is assessed against the framework. The governors (Chairman Richard Holt and external specialist Jason Lancaster) provide impartial scrutiny and challenge in governance board meetings. Training is funded through the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

Description of Programmes

Juniper offers full-time and part-time study programmes from entry level to level 3, which include maths and English, employability skills, personal social development and work experience. The programmes aim to equip learners with the necessary, skills, knowledge and behaviours to obtain a positive destination to an apprenticeship, further education course at a higher level, higher education or job with training. The programmes are individualised to meet the needs of learners and offer access to a wide range of vocational sectors. Work experience placements are personalised and based upon the needs and interests of learners; they are broad ranging and not limited to specific sector areas. Full-time study programmes consist typically of 550 guided learning hours per learner per year, over a 30-week period. In 2020/21, Juniper offered vocational pathways in Childcare, Health and Social Care, Business Administration, Customer Service and Construction.

We had a subcontracting arrangement with UK Sports in place in the 2020/21 academic year. The study programmes include level 3, coaching and sports focussed vocational qualifications. The provision was delivered in the following regions: East of England (Cambridge & St Ives), East Midlands (Leicester), London (Heathrow), South East (Bicester & Bracknell), South West (Cirencester) and the West Midlands (Stratford).

Traineeships will last anything from six weeks to a maximum of six months with the content tailored to the needs of the individual student. The core element includes work preparation training (ensuring young people are ready and have the confidence to take the first step in their career) and a continuation of English and maths study (if they do not hold a grade 9-4 in GCSE). In addition to this, trainees complete a high quality work experience placement in their occupational area of interest, providing insight and experience of the world of work and a progression route, preferably an apprenticeship.

Juniper offers level 2 to level 5 apprenticeships in the following sector areas: Business, Administration and Law; Construction, Planning and Built Environment; Education and Training; Health, Public Services and Care and Retail and Commercial Enterprise.

Self-Assessment and Quality Assurance Processes

Juniper Training was last inspected by Ofsted in July 2017 and was judged to be good. The self-assessment process underpins Juniper’s quality assurance processes. In compiling the annual self-assessment report, all staff and a proportion of learners and employers have been involved in reviewing and reporting on the quality of provision within their centre. The Head of Quality is responsible for overseeing this process. Performance Managers initiated the quality assurance process within their centres to collate and agree centre self-assessment judgements and grading. Centre Improvement Plans are produced based on the initial findings from the self-assessment process and added to throughout the academic year to strive for continual improvement. The process strives to be robust and accurate and uses centrally collated and confirmed data provided by Juniper’s own Management Information and data from software such as PICS WEB to inform judgements. Additional data and evidence from provision reviews, student focus groups, observations of key learning processes and external quality assurance reports were also used.

The self-assessment report uses the criteria as set out in the Education Inspection Framework (2019). Provision is graded according to EIF descriptors as follows:-

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires Improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Juniper Self-Assessment Grades

SAR Grades August 2019 – July 2020	Grade
Overall Effectiveness	2
Effectiveness of Quality of Education	2
Behaviour and Attitudes	2
Personal Development	2
Leadership and Management	2
Education Programmes for Young People	2
Apprenticeships	2
High Needs	2

Effectiveness of Quality of Education

Strengths

Leaders provide a varied curriculum for Study Programme, Traineeship & Apprenticeship learners, which develops the knowledge, skills and behaviours that learners need to prepare them for their next stage in education, training or employment. Existing vocational Study Programme curriculum offers have been developed further to support learners.

Senior leaders and managers continue to maintain and grow strategic links with employers and are aligning these to the provision. The construction provision, for both study programmes and apprenticeships continued to grow in 2020/21 despite the challenges of the pandemic. Delivery has now started at Rydale Roofing and we have used our experience of establishing our provision at SPV (employer in the same sector) to ensure that the provision meets the needs of learners and employers. The introduction of the Advanced Childcare pathway has given learners an alternative to local colleges and has increased the chances of these learners securing job outcomes in the childcare sector. For example, learners that complete this course can be counted in the ratios of staffing within childcare settings which makes them more appealing to potential employers.

Curriculum leaders have recognised that further refinement of the study programme curriculums in Customer Service, Choices and Workskills is necessary to ensure that learners acquire the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to be fully prepared for their next steps. The new qualifications selected and project based curriculums allow learners to put their new learning into practice more quickly in real life situations rather than learning being restricted by a criteria led plan for learning. The very large majority of learners on these pathways can now with fluency describe what they have learned so far in the context of their future career choices and day to day lives.

Employer feedback has been used effectively to further develop the Traineeship curriculum. Learners attend mandatory workshops to extend upon their existing knowledge of important topics including, employer expectations, safeguarding, interview skills and job applications. Relationships with employers are good with local centre staff and are further developed over time through regular contact. In a recent Traineeship Survey (December 21), most Traineeship employers spoken to report having good trainees that are 'a good fit' and are well supported by Juniper.

Leaders were quick to identify learning gaps for vocational study programme learners caused by online learning, especially those learners who perform better in face-to-face sessions and utilised catch-up tuition to support learners to complete their learning and courses towards the end of 2020/21, when it was safe for learners to return to the classroom. Study Programme learners also benefitted from Maths and English catch-up support. Catch-up Maths and English tutors have a bank of resources closely aligned to the Functional Skills and GCSE curriculum and plan their delivery based on their learners' knowledge gaps identified and communicated by the centre Maths and/or English tutor. Meaning most learners are quick to fill knowledge gaps and report "lightbulb" moments in catch-up sessions that then positively impact upon improvements in understanding in class and assessments. In the most recent student survey, most learners stated that they were finding the additional lessons useful in helping them to catch up on lost learning.

Our apprenticeship provision continues to grow in numbers and quality. Strong strategic partnership working with external organisations such as, the Black Country Chamber of Commerce, Greater Manchester

Chamber of Commerce, Greater Birmingham LEP, Telford and Wrekin Provider Network, Black Country Provider Network and Birmingham Ladder for Apprenticeships helps to raise the profile of apprenticeships with employers, identify gaps in local provision and to inform content of delivery within our curriculum areas. A minority of apprentices have been shortlisted for awards including two regional finalists at the National Apprenticeship Awards and one of our apprentices won the 'Apprentice of the Year in Construction', awarded by the Birmingham Ladder for Apprenticeships. Juniper were also a finalist for Service Provider and Large Employer of the Year Award for the Black Country Chamber of Commerce.

Juniper has developed strong partnerships working with local councils and we are preferred apprenticeship provider for Walsall Council, Dudley Council, Greater Manchester Council and Staffordshire Council. Sandwell Council cite Juniper's strengths as: *'Communication with employers, Adapting to my needs and Initial assessment of apprentices'*.

We have forged a particularly strong relationship with Walsall Council and are their provider of choice to deliver Early Years Practitioner L2, Early Years Educator L3 and Teaching Assistant L3. *'Juniper respond very quickly, starts are turned around very quickly, issues are addressed efficiently and our apprentices have achieved a significant number of distinctions whilst studying with Juniper'* Helena Baxter, Walsall Council. We also deliver non-mandatory additional qualifications as part of these apprenticeship standards to better meet the needs of this employer.

The large majority of learners develop substantial knowledge, skills and especially behaviours that prepare them well to have the confidence and ability to progress positively to work, apprenticeships and further learning.

Learners report in recent feedback surveys and focus groups that Juniper is helping them to develop the skills, knowledge and behaviours required for their next step. Employers substantiate this; 100% reported that Juniper is helping learners to prepare for the world of work when they start their placement and 95% would consider offering learners a job or apprenticeship at the end of their programme (Study Programme Employer Survey Feedback – December 2021).

The curriculum addresses social disadvantage as it provides opportunities for those from disadvantaged backgrounds to access education; the large majority of learners progress to a positive destination upon completion of their programme.

Juniper's training centres are located in areas of high deprivation. Leaders, managers and staff provide inclusive opportunities for learners, many of whom have previously had a poor experience of education, to engage in education and training. They provide wrap around support and assist learners that have barriers and a lack of external support to gain a positive learning experience. Our Study Programme curriculums have been carefully thought out to meet the needs of local NEETs. Information provided by local authorities around common barriers has been considered to ensure that learners overcome those barriers quickly from the point that learners start their programmes.

Many study programme and traineeship learners have previously attended college and other education institutions but report a lack of support to enable completion of their programmes. Juniper's study programmes have monthly intakes and traineeships have weekly intakes. This allows NEET learners to access

education to continue their learning journey without having to wait until the start of the next academic year, significantly reducing the risk of learners becoming disengaged and demotivated.

The large majority of our Study Programme and Traineeship learners secure positive destinations upon completion of their learning programmes into either further education, higher education, employment or apprenticeships. The very large majority of apprentices secure positive destinations upon completion of their programmes, either into permanent roles with their employer or an alternative employer or a higher-level apprenticeship programme.

Learners recognise the value of the curriculum they are taught and understand how skills and knowledge are transferable to different sector areas. Leaders and teachers have ensured that there is a strong focus, and opportunities are provided within each curriculum area, for learners to develop their skills and knowledge in broader areas including work readiness and life experience.

Learners benefit from a range of non-qualification activity including progress reviews, opportunities to develop their personal and employability skills to gain knowledge and understanding aside from the technical and vocational skills that they are developing. Learners on study programme mature through the programme and the opportunities they have through work experience in particular, enable them to appreciate employer expectations and how to communicate better in the adult world.

Staff are in the process of re-establishing their previously strong links with local employers and are making good progress against the backdrop of the ongoing issues created by the pandemic. This is reflected in very high numbers of apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities created and available to new learners and those existing Study Programme learners aiming to upskill themselves. We have invested in new technology such as online CPD e-learning modules through The Skills Network which have been woven into the Choices and Traineeship pathways in addition to alternative in-house employability training for learners on Traineeships. Through the periods of the year where restrictions have eased, Juniper have swiftly and safely supported learners to return to their work placements enabling them to continue with this invaluable learning experience.

Learners, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds or those with SEND, benefit from high technical and vocational ambitions. Leaders and teachers promote high expectations for achievement and progress of all learners and have robust systems in place to monitor this.

Leaders and teachers ensure a positive and inclusive culture is in place that is based upon high expectations. Centre managers and staff monitor progress of vulnerable learners through the monthly ILR report and apply interventions to assist them to get back on track. At a company level, leaders monitor the achievement of different groups to reduce disparity. Where disparities are identified leaders and managers are quick to respond. For example, a student counsellor has been employed to provide more intensive support to the increasing number of learners with mental health issues and social and emotional difficulties as a result of the pandemic. Significant progress has been made with learners with EHCPs and Dyslexia and they achieve as well as, or better than their counterparts. For the minority of learners who do not achieve and progress, staff work hard to enable these learners to access external services and signpost them to alternative provision for more specialist support.

Teachers have good subject expertise and skills to deliver high quality education to young people and apprentices. The few underperforming teachers are well supported to develop their subject expertise and practice.

Leaders put good support in place for new staff and ensure that their progress is monitored in monthly reviews. Where managers identify that new or underperforming staff member requires additional support, the training team, supported by lead practitioners and sector leads work closely with them to develop their practice. Staff benefit from wide-ranging opportunities to develop through regular and targeted CPD activities, including qualifications, training courses, industry days, company training days, standardisation meetings and shadowing opportunities. The introduction and use of new learning technologies has accelerated the pace of, and enabled increased capacity to provide short bursts of intensive support. Staff in particular value the support they have received to develop their use of Microsoft 365, Teams, Zoom and Smart Assessor and learners have benefited from their increased confidence in using such systems and interactive platforms.

In the large majority of classes, teachers deliver valuable, well-planned lessons that enable learners to understand key concepts. In these lessons, teachers present information clearly and promote good discussion and debate in order for learners to further develop their knowledge and skills.

Learners enjoy their learning and benefit from wide-ranging opportunities to understand key concepts. 96% of study programme learners and 96% of apprentices report that they would recommend Juniper to a friend. Most learners recognise how their lessons are enabling them to build their vocational skills and knowledge as well and improve their understanding of maths, English and employability (Learner and Apprentice Student Feedback – October/December 2021).

Teachers use assessment well to check learners' understanding and provide effective verbal and written feedback that outlines what learners do well and what they need to improve. In a small minority of cases, teachers do not use assessment sufficiently well to inform their future teaching.

Regular feedback and marking of assessments and work help learners to improve their work. Learners are encouraged through positive praise both verbally and written to develop their knowledge and understanding of topics. IQAs and the training and development team support staff to develop their practice in this area and as a result learner feedback improves and is used to inform their teaching.

The curriculum and training team have refined the assessment process to ease administration burdens when assessing remotely. For example, the IQA team have shared best practice on how to work more efficiently to upload and assess portfolio evidence. In VMPP courses, assessment materials have been developed using the advanced features of Teams to develop self-marking assessments which provides tutors with capacity to focus on providing feedback for their 'milestone assessments'. As a result, the quality of feedback that learners receive has improved enabling them to understand better their strengths and development needs.

Teachers ensure that topics are revisited frequently, enabling learners to build and secure skills and knowledge, so that key concepts are embedded in their long term memory.

Teachers provide opportunities for learners to revisit and consolidate their learning through formative assessment methods such as practice assessments, class re-caps and quizzes. Teachers take advantage of

the roll on roll off nature of the study programme and traineeship provision to encourage existing learners to explain to new learners, key concepts and previous topics. Which allows new learners to integrate quickly into their groups.

Internal processes for monitoring the quality and effectiveness of provision on a local level and companywide have been further strengthened and are impacting positively upon the experiences that learners have.

The quality and curriculum team have completed individual centre provision reviews and centralised themed activities to monitor the quality of our provision and the impact that it has upon our learners. In addition to individual centre provision reviews, further reviews have taken place into Online Learning, Traineeships, Catch-Up Learning and Subcontracted Provision Review. During these reviews, the Quality and Curriculum team complete activities such as lesson observations (in person and online), interviews with learners, interviews with staff including managers, desktop analysis of data such as attendance and achievement and scrutiny of learner work to determine the impact of assessment and feedback.

Following these reviews, reports are made available to senior managers and themes of focus are identified along with individual actions to improve. Senior leaders work closely with managers to bring about these improvements. Increasingly, follow up monitoring visits are evidencing the positive impact of this process in key areas. For example; a stronger focus on skills development in a minority of vocational learning sessions where the focus had previously been too weighted towards generating assessment criteria, improved quality of developmental written feedback on learner work for those staff who were not doing this quickly enough and improved timeliness and quality of learner progress reviews.

Overall achievement for apprentices was good in the 2020/21 academic year and are above national achievement rates*. A high proportion of apprentices achieve distinctions in their end point assessments.

Good achievement rates were maintained in 2020/21. Leaders and staff have continued to further strengthen the quality of the apprenticeship curriculum offer. Consequently, apprentices and employers benefit from: a more robust initial assessment process and improvements to the curriculum content, driven by the Apprenticeship Contract Manager and Sector Leads. As a result, achievement rates remained high and fewer apprentices leave their apprenticeship early. Additionally, a high proportion of learners achieve distinction grades in their end point assessments and 100% of employers reported that they could see the development of their apprentice's skills and contribution to their business (Apprenticeship Employer Survey – October 2021).

***comparison to the latest available published NARTs data 18/19**

Good careers education, information, advice and guidance is offered throughout their learning programme and in the large majority of centres learners are being well-prepared and are ready for their stage of education, training or employment. A small minority of apprentices report that they have not been provided with sufficient advice to help them make decisions about their future career.

Learners appreciate the support they are getting from their teachers and progression co-ordinators to explore career options, obtain work experience and make applications for their next step. 97% of learners report that Juniper is helping to prepare them to obtain a job, apprenticeship or further learning when they

complete their programme (Student Survey – December 2021). We have maintained our Matrix accreditation in 2020/21 and successfully passed our continuous improvement check.

The apprenticeship contract manager has put in place CPD activities to ensure that all apprentices are receiving good CEIAG throughout their programme. Early signs show that improvements have already been made; for example, the quality team have seen improvements in discussions taking place during workplace visits, reviews and desktop audits. However, it is too early to measure the full impact of these improvements at present.

Areas for Improvement

The achievement rates for Health and Social Care Study Programme learners are too low

The challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic in our first year of delivering Health and Social Care have resulted in low achievement rates. The forced move to online learning was particularly difficult for the staff involved, who were delivering a new qualification for the first time. Online learning made it much more challenging for learners to benefit from physical practical demonstrations to help them develop new knowledge and skills. The requirements of referencing work was a new concept for our learners and many had gaps in their study skills due to missing extensive periods of their final year at school; this resulted in delays in assessing of learner work. Intense central support has been put in place for these tutors to help them to improve. The curriculum has been tweaked to ensure that referencing is covered as a priority at the very start of learners' Health and Social Care courses.

For a small minority of learners joining during the academic year, the sequencing of the curriculum is not always sufficiently well developed to enable them to seamlessly join their study programme. However, supportive teachers mostly provide extra help that supports them through this transition.

The roll on, roll off nature of the programme presents the biggest challenge to teachers for study programme and traineeships but the large majority of tutors are adept in ensuring that learners have the best transition and quickly settle into their learning programme. The curriculum plans have all been tweaked to ensure that new learners always join at the beginning of a new project which has helped learners to integrate more quickly into their new groups.

The initial assessment of apprentices is not consistently used sufficiently well enough to inform teaching.

Initial assessment of apprentices is in place but a minority of assessment coordinators do not yet use this information sufficiently well at an early enough stage of the programme to plan apprentices programmes. New processes are in place to rectify this area but it is too soon to measure the impact of these new processes.

Careers education, information, advice and guidance for UK Sports learners needs to be strengthened further to be incorporated at the very early stages of their course.

Whilst the very large majority of UK Sport learners progress into a positive destination, a minority of learners report that they do not receive careers education and advice during the early stages of their course.

Consequently, too many learners are unsure about their destination and do not have a clear progression plan in place early enough in their programme.

Vocational study programmes require further development to secure improved achievement rates including through strengthened recruitment processes.

The introduction of vocational pathways has provided study programme learners with better options for career development. However, the achievement rates for this academic year require further improvement and have been negatively impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Leaders and staff have refined processes in place to ensure that learners are ready to undertake these specific pathways.

The timeliness of achievement for apprentices requires improvement to reach pre-pandemic levels.

Apprenticeship achievement rates are above the national average* with a large proportion of apprentices achieving distinction grades in their end point assessment. However, a minority of apprentices do not complete their programme by their planned end date. This is as a result of the impact of Covid-19 whereby, apprentices were made redundant and had to find new employers, those apprentices working in front line roles struggled to complete their off-the-job training and the apprentices who were negatively affected by interruptions/backlog for end point assessment. As restrictions have eased, leaders have employed strategies to improve the timeliness and will be closely monitoring this in the 2021/22 academic year.

*comparison to the latest available published NARTs data 18/19

Effectiveness of Behaviour and Attitudes

Strengths

Staff have high expectations for learner behaviour.

Learners are polite, courteous, behave respectfully and have good rapport with teachers, assessment coordinators, employers and visitors. Staff tackle rare instance of poor behaviour swiftly and apply appropriate interventions. Effective communication around the expectations of learner behaviour and conduct takes place even prior to learners starting their programme, conduct and behaviour are then closely monitored throughout the induction period and beyond into the different pathways. Learners, especially those with a poor educational experience previously, are supported well to improve their confidence, communication and self-regulation skills to become more independent learners over the duration of their learning programmes. Apprentices are well-supported by their assessment coordinators to quickly develop their workplace behaviours and professionalism. In the very few instances where issue arise, assessment coordinators challenge their apprentices to make improvements, ensuring that their future career prospects are not hindered by a lack of understanding of employer expectations.

Learners are ready to learn and participate fully in their curriculum.

Teachers have developed the motivation of learners and they arrive to training sessions prepared to learn. Outdoor clothing is removed and learners are free from distractions such as food and drink, positive behaviours such as taking notes to capture learning are common place. Learning resources such as

stationery and technology are available for learners whilst in centre, and IT equipment is provided to learners that do not have access, so that they are not disadvantaged.

There is a zero tolerance approach to bullying, harassment and discrimination.

Learners have a good understanding of the signs of bullying and have the confidence to report any such issues to staff. Any reported issues are dealt with swiftly and effectively. An online code of conduct has been introduced across all provision types to take into account the additional concerns that online learning can cause; learners speak very positively and clearly about the support that they have received to keep themselves safe online. Learners feel safe whilst learning from home, in training centres and whilst attending work experience placements.

Staff know and care about learners.

Staff provide high levels of pastoral support to learners and learners improve their confidence and motivation. Progress of learners is closely monitored and where needed support is put in place to ensure that learners get the help that they need. The very large majority of apprenticeship employers speak positively about the support that their apprentices receive from Juniper. Most employers in recent surveys feel that Juniper provides good or better support for learners (Apprenticeship and Study Programme Surveys, October/December 2021). A very high proportion of learners across all provision types are particularly satisfied that they have developed their self-motivation, self-confidence and team working skills as a result of the support that they have received.

Learners develop employability skills that help them to prepare for their next steps.

Learners recognise their strengths and are able to apply their learning in the workplace; employers speak highly about the progress and behaviour of learners and workplace learning is well coordinated. In a recent employer survey (December 2021), 100% of employers rated the professionalism of staff as good or better and 100% would recommend working with Juniper to other employers/organisations.

Areas for Improvement

Learners' attendance and punctuality rates in a few centres is too low.

Too many learners in these centres are not sufficiently challenged to rapidly improve their poor attendance and punctuality for learner attendance to be deemed good. In these centres, strategies employed by staff including: rapid interventions with learners; phone calls and meetings with parents/guardians; and the use of letters have not yet had sufficient impact. Punctuality is inconsistent in a few centres and requires further improvement before it is good. Lateness in a small minority of centres is not sufficiently challenged. Progress against improving the attendance and punctuality has been impeded by the various national lockdowns in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Staff are continuing their efforts to improve this further but this is not yet back to the levels reported pre-pandemic. Learners report through forums and surveys that staff are helping them to improve these vital employability skills.

Effectiveness of Personal Development

Strengths

Learners have the opportunity to access a broad curriculum that extends beyond the technical and vocational elements of qualifications.

Leaders and managers have constructed a highly aspirational curriculum that gives learners the opportunity to develop important knowledge around important topics such as; knife crime, growth mind-set, social media, body image, anxiety, depression, child sexual exploitation, drug and alcohol misuse. External speakers are often engaged to deliver training around these topics and there are clear examples of these sessions resonating with learners, in forums learners are particularly effective at identifying the strategies that they can use to promote good mental health.

Assessment coordinators also ensure that apprentices benefit from similarly rich activities by running group workshops; these workshops cover a range of topics that are important for apprentices such as health and safety, emotional intelligence, coaching, mental health, Prevent and British Values. These workshops also allow apprentices to meet new people who are completing similar courses to them. All centres have established strong links within their local communities and are able to signpost learners to local support for a range of issues including, health, housing, staying safe, mental health, relationships and money.

Most learners understand well their rights and responsibilities as a student, employee and citizen. They are respectful and work well with others to foster productive working relationships.

Tutors are effective in drawing upon current newsworthy topics to initiate conversations with learners and assist them in understanding their responsibilities as a citizen within their local communities. An example being discussions taking place around the importance of adhering to the national Covid-19 restrictions and displaying these behaviours whilst learners are attending their training. The overwhelming majority of learners report in learner forums that they have made new friends since joining their respective courses and enjoy working alongside their peers.

Learning environments are inclusive and learners openly talk about their differences without fear of bullying or harassment.

Learners can confidently explain what action they would take if they felt that they were being bullied in the workplace or in centre. Childcare pathway learners and apprentices develop the understanding of how to support children with SEND and Customer Service pathway learners develop their understanding of the needs of customers with disabilities. The large majority of learners are able to identify protected characteristics.

Learners are given lots of support to effectively manage their mental health.

Staff are committed to closely monitoring the mental health of learners including capturing information at the recruitment stage pertaining to the mental health of learners; implementing support plans and opening safeguarding reports where necessary. Learners also benefit from attending standalone sessions on this topic and as a result, learners can give clear examples of they can maintain good mental health. For those

learners who require additional support with their mental health, staff are effective in signposting them to either Juniper's Student Counsellor or local support agencies.

The very large majority of all types of learners including apprentices indicate through forums and surveys that their wellbeing is checked regularly by staff. They confirm that they would be confident to report mental health concerns to staff and assured that they would receive the support that they need.

Learners gain access to high quality CEIAG from an early stage of the programme and contact with local employers that helps inform decisions around future career goals.

Learners are exposed to conversations around their career aspirations right from the interview stage of their programmes. This is then expanded upon through the V/MPP stage of the programme where learners self-assess their suitability for their preferred careers, and with the assistance of teachers and progression coordinators are able to select pathway that is right for them. The large majority of learners then access the world of work through suitable work experience opportunities with local employers.

Juniper maintained their Matrix accreditation in February 21', with CEIAG support for learners, sharing good CEIAG practice amongst staff and the quality of support available on the website being identified as particular strengths. Most apprentices communicate through learner surveys and forums that they are given enough careers information, advice and guidance to help them make informed decisions about their future career. We have plugged some of the gaps created by the Covid-19 pandemic which has limited a minority of work experience opportunities with some local businesses closing or having high numbers of staff being away for their businesses due to self-isolation and others being understandably concerned about the health and safety of their workers. For example, as part of the Customer Service curriculum, learners attend a careers day where staff expertise are utilised and learners attend workshops on Teams to find out information and develop their knowledge of customer service across the specific sectors that the staff have worked in such as retail, floristry, call centres and starting their own business.

In a small minority of instances, apprentices and UK Sports learners do not always receive sufficient advice early enough to make informed decisions about their future career. Whilst actions have been put in place to develop this for example, talks from a broader range of employers for UK Sport learners, the impact of this is not yet fully evident. Leaders and managers will be monitoring this closely in the 2021/22 academic year to ensure that this is further strengthened.

Learners understand well how to keep themselves safe online.

Learners achieve an e-safety milestone as part of their MPP induction period. Learners understand that online learning and increased screen time heightens the risk of radicalisation and other risks such as identity theft and fraud. Apprentices are also well informed about keeping safe online as part of their induction and confidently identify characteristics of individuals who may be more likely to become radicalised and the signs of radicalisation. Surveys and forums show that the overwhelming majority of learners have been given advice strategies and support around keeping safe online.

Learners are resilient and improve their digital skills.

As a direct consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic learners have been challenged to improve their digital skills. Many learners had little or no previous experience of accessing learning via online platforms when the

restrictions were first introduced so are still adapting to this new way of learning. With the support of teachers, learners have gained confidence in screen sharing; using the chat function to interact with their teachers and peers; learning in break out rooms and uploading and downloading work. These skills will be invaluable for learners as they move on into their next steps, especially with many businesses signalling their intent to continue to use these technologies when the pandemic is over.

The opportunities for learners to explore personal, social and ethical issues and take part in wider society is embedded in all areas of the provision in the large majority of centres.

Learners benefit from multiple opportunities to explore personal, social and ethical issues in lessons and reviews. Examples include debates and discussions on living in a multi-cultural society and celebrating different religious festivals, registering to vote as well as lessons on stereotyping and employment law. Learners explore topics such as terrorism and extremism, examples include learners exploring dangers of being radicalised and the characteristics that may make an individual vulnerable to radicalisation.

Staff promote equality of opportunity and ensure learners with particular vulnerabilities are well supported, helping them to understand that difference is a positive.

Learners develop their confidence and have a well-rounded understanding of the needs of other learners. They support one another and are respectful of others' experiences and backgrounds. Learners can explain with clarity the support that is available to them and how their needs are met by staff. This results in an inclusive environment where all feel valued by staff and their peers, despite the differences they may have.

Learners requiring additional support are identified during the recruitment and initial assessment phase of their programme and individual Support Plans are put in place. Staff monitor the progress and wellbeing of vulnerable learners and those with protected characteristics, such as learners who are transitioning, learners with learning differences such as dyslexia and autism. They ensure that those students have access to the resources and equipment needed e.g. reading pens, time and space to talk to staff, fidget objects and maths and English mats. Reasonable adjustments are made for exams and assessments and staff engage external agencies effectively so that they feel supported and safe whilst in training centres, at work and in everyday life.

Areas for Improvement

In a few centres, learners have a basic understanding of issues related to British values. However, they have not been supported sufficiently to explore these topics in detail beyond a limited overview.

This requires improvement because in these centres, learners are able to identify British Values and provide examples when prompted. However, their knowledge is surface level and they do not yet understand well enough how these relate to their own context in work and in everyday life. A small minority of apprentices also struggle to contextualise how British Values relate to their work and life.

A minority of centres have well planned activities and sessions to develop learners' understanding of how to keep physically healthy and maintain an active lifestyle. However, this is not yet consistent across the centre network.

Whilst the large majority of learners through forums and surveys, explain that they have received advice and support on how to keep fit and stay healthy, there is a significant minority of learners who cannot explain how they can implement this knowledge into their everyday life. The curriculum in these centres have not yet been sufficiently developed to allow learners to put this knowledge into practice. Opportunities to go out in the community and take part in sports and gym sessions have been limited by the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent restrictions.

A small minority of apprentices do not access additional training that develops them beyond the confines of their curriculum.

These apprentices miss opportunities to access an extended curriculum that develops them beyond the technical elements of their programme, this is largely due to a lack of access to the off-the-job training available to them. Assessment coordinators have implemented a good quality suite of additional learning opportunities for apprentices but a few employers still need to be challenged further to support apprentices to complete their off-the-job training and attend planned workshops.

Effectiveness of Leadership and Management

Strengths

Leaders promote a culture of high expectations of all learners, including those who are disadvantaged and/or have SEND; there is a positive culture in place which supports the large majority of learners to achieve their learning goals and progress to a positive destination.

Overall qualification achievement rates for Apprenticeship were above the national average. Our Study Programme learners achieved well against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic when considering the significant challenges that this presented to the education sector. Our sub-contracted sports provision did exceptionally well and most learners achieved their main level 3 qualification.

Just over a third of apprentices and almost half of learners report that their education has been adversely affected by the pandemic (Student and Apprentice Feedback Survey – December 2020). Leaders and managers took swift action to ensure that learners are able to realise their full potential. Examples include targeted, small group support in maths and English by utilising catch-up tuition funding. Consequently, the learners that regularly attended the additional lessons reported that it had helped them to grasp concepts more quickly and allowed them to have 'lightbulb moments'. In a recent student survey, the very large majority of study programme learners who had accessed additional lessons reported that the additional support had been helpful. The introduction of an in-house counselling service has helped learners to better cope with the detrimental mental health impacts of the pandemic. In addition to this, our initial assessment processes for apprentices have been further strengthened by the introduction of diagnostic testing, to identify those learners who are neuro-diverse and therefore require support.

The performance of different groups of learners is closely monitored by senior leaders and managers who take effective action to address any areas of underperformance. This ensures that the large majority of learners from SEND groups achieve and progress at least as well as their peers and in the current academic year, disadvantaged learners have outperformed their peers. There is a robust system in place to ensure that all learners with SEND and those from vulnerable groups have individual support plans in place. In a few

instances, SEND support needs have not been identified quickly enough and support strategies put in place resulting in slower than expected progress.

Staff benefit from wide ranging CPD opportunities that align well with the curriculum and develops teachers' subject expertise and pedagogical knowledge to enable them to deliver good quality education and training.

CPD opportunities are plentiful and staff benefit from wide-ranging activities to support their subject and pedagogical knowledge. Activities include undertaking formal qualifications, training courses, industry days, company training days, standardisation meetings, self-study/research and shadowing opportunities. Most teaching staff have (or are working towards) appropriate qualifications and have the appropriate training and skills that enable them to effectively plan and deliver training appropriate to industry practice and employers' needs. A few vocational tutors on study programme require industry days to ensure that they refresh their knowledge in their specialist area and whilst in some instances current restrictions are preventing them from completing this, this is in their planned CPD.

Learners value and benefit from staff expertise in improving their understanding of the world of work. Staff act as role models to inspire learners to increase their ambitions; they develop effective working relationships with learners to them to overcome their previous barriers to learning. Staff have responded well, to increase their skills and expertise in using new technology. This has enabled them to use new interactive platforms to deliver learning and assessment activities and they have embraced the opportunity to develop Juniper's remote education offer. As a result, learners are also benefitting from increasing their digital skills and knowledge, placing them in a strong position to respond to the needs' of employers.

Leaders ensure that all learners benefit from effective teaching and high expectations in classrooms, workshops and whilst at work.

A culture of high expectations is evident in the large majority of lessons and apprentice training sessions. Learners benefit from a well-rounded experience at Juniper. Generally, evidence in learning walks, support and challenge visits and observations signify that teaching and assessment practice is good; tutors are less reliant upon the standard lesson plans and resources and therefore apply a more individualised approach to TLA. Teachers are creative in the delivery of vocational lessons, where possible they make links to learners' work experience which enables learners to be more engaged in learning activities and more focussed on successfully completing their qualifications. As a result, learners routinely experience good and better teaching and learning, improving their engagement and progress. A few tutors require further training and support to improve their online delivery; managers are aware of their needs and action plans are in place to help them to improve their teaching.

Leaders and staff engage well with learners, parents, their community and employers to support the education and training that learners get.

Most centres involve the support of parents/guardians and support workers to engage learners, in particular, those who have SEND and vulnerabilities. Staff communicate well and welcome their input for example, regular updates are communicated by telephone and email; and parents/guardians/ support workers are invited to attend meetings and interventions, so that learners remain on track with their learning programme.

Employers recognise the professionalism of Juniper staff and as a result, 95% of employers in the most recent Employer Survey would recommend working with Juniper. Regular communication between Juniper staff and employers enable learners to successfully engage with their work experience opportunities. Where issues are identified, Juniper staff act swiftly to provide resolutions so that most learners benefit from meaningful exposure to the world of work.

Leaders are considerate of the workload and wellbeing of their staff. Leaders promote and foster an environment of equality and diversity well and effectively protect learners and staff from bullying, harassment and discrimination.

Leaders and managers have instilled a strongly supportive culture throughout the organisation whereby bullying, harassment and discrimination are not tolerated. Workload and caseloads for staff are considered by leaders and staff resource is managed well and as a result 89% of staff report that leaders and managers are considerate of workload and wellbeing (Staff Survey November 2021).

There is a wide range of health and wellbeing initiatives in place to support staff including: an Employer Assistance Programme – where staff have access to free counselling and support; an option to join a health cash plan – Health Shield – which provides cover for every day healthcare needs such as dental, physiotherapy, wellbeing, eye tests, prescriptions etc.; staff have an additional day off for their birthday and can access the innovative ‘J-Fit’ scheme where staff can earn 5 days additional holiday per year when they participate in regular, physical activity; a cycle to work scheme; critical illness cover and flexible holiday scheme which allows staff to purchase up to 10 days additional leave per annum.

The pandemic has undoubtedly affected the wellbeing of staff both personally and professionally with the uncertainties surrounding it. Leaders recognise this and have taken steps to provide assurance and support. Staff report that they feel well supported and appreciate the communication and wellbeing activities put in place. Examples include frequent updates from the Managing Director, flexible working patterns and early Friday finish, Random acts of kindness, Euro competition and prize giveaway, Christmas conference, staff recognition and thank you vouchers for all. The very large majority of staff reported that managers have managed staff safety and wellbeing well through the Covid-19 period and 98% of staff feel that the senior management team communicated effectively with them during Covid-19/lockdown periods (Staff Survey, November 2021).

Leaders have high ambitions for all learners, including those who are difficult to engage. As a result, learners with low prior attainment improve their life chances and progress into further study or work.

Juniper is helping the learners with poor prior experience of education and learners with barriers, including SEND, to recognise and value their skills and abilities to increase their employability prospects.

This is evident as the large majority, many of whom have previously not succeeded in formal learning, secured a positive destination. This was a consequence of their improved engagement, motivation and participation. The impact of lockdowns in the last academic year resulted in the disengagement of learners but leaders worked tirelessly during this period to re-engage learners. Strategies have been put in place to support those affected by gaps in their education through catch-up sessions in maths, English, vocational and in-house counselling/wellbeing support. This will enable learners to achieve their progression goals and will help to minimise the long-term detrimental effect of Covid-19. 96% of learners feel that their course will

help them to secure a job, apprenticeship or further study when they complete their programme. 98% of staff agree that Juniper supports learners to progress.

Leaders work well with employers and the local authority to ensure that provision is aligned to meet local needs. Example of this include: implementing ESOL provision in Leicester to support career aspirations and further improve employability prospects; developing niche, roofing study programme and apprenticeship provision to fill gaps shortages in the local labour market and offering specific apprenticeship standards in residential care where there was a lack of provision with the local area.

The EDIMs report (Aug 2020 – July 2021)

55 learners on study programme in 2020/21 were either in care or leaving care (3% and 1% of all starts respectively). MI data shows that:

- ❖ The previous gaps in progression for both learners in care have been eradicated; in care learners progress as well as their counterparts.
- ❖ Progression rates for leaving care learners are significantly higher than their counterparts.

Whilst it is recognised that national rates of achievement and progression for care learners are very low. In line with government priorities, leaders and managers will continue to monitor this group closely to ensure they achieve parity.

70 learners on study programme in 2020/21 had an Education and Health Care Plan. MI data shows that:

- ❖ The previous disparities in achievement and progression have been eradicated and learners with an EHCP outperform their counterparts in all areas with the exception of the achievement of vocational qualifications, whereby a narrow gap of 7% remains.

All Learners increase their likelihood of obtaining future employment, by developing vital skills as part of lessons and through work-related activity. Learners are proud of their work and achievements; many of whom have had a poor previous educational experience or have suffered bullying, feel valued and included by staff and their peers. Consequently, they recognise their skills and abilities and have the confidence to access further learning and work.

Governance arrangements are effective; programmes are well maintained and governors hold senior managers and leaders to account.

Effective governance arrangements are in place. The AELP Code of Good Governance, for Independent Learning Providers, has been implemented and the performance and effectiveness of Juniper's governance is assessed against the framework. This ensures the best interests of learners, apprentices, and employers, and that public funds we receive are well spent and focused on meeting our company goals and government priorities. The governors (Chairman Richard Holt and external specialist Jason Lancaster) have a clear oversight on the quality of provision; they provide impartial scrutiny and challenge in governance board meetings. Between them, they provide significant experience and expertise in business leadership and management and performance improvement in the education sector. Improvements in the provision are evident in data, provision reviews, learning walks and observations of key learner processes. Leaders and

managers are fully aware that the outcomes and quality of teaching, learning and assessment needs to be further improved for GCSE provision and actions to do this are underway.

Clear performance management, business continuity assessment and quality improvement plans have benefitted the quality and performance of Juniper's learning programmes. However, we recognise that specific weaknesses including GCSE achievement require further work to be improved sufficiently. Financial health remains stable and has been effectively monitored by leaders and managers, through the pandemic period, to ensure that provision and resources can be maintained over time.

Safeguarding arrangements are highly effective. Staff routinely identify, help and protect learners who may need early help or who are at risk of neglect, abuse, grooming, exploitation, radicalisation or extremism.

Student safety and well-being is paramount. A comprehensive Safeguarding Policy, Procedure and Guidance document is well established with clear lines of reporting that are well understood by staff and learners. Learners feel safe and value the supportive environment. Juniper Student Surveys show that 99% of apprentices and 100% of study programme learners 'Felt safe and know how to deal with issues including: radicalisation, extremism, bullying or abuse' (student & apprentice surveys, October/December 2021), this is supported by the views of learners spoken to in student forums. All staff have undertaken Safeguarding training as part of their induction training; in line with 'safer recruitment' policy, DBS checks are undertaken with all staff and a central record held at CSS.

Juniper employs a Deputy Safeguarding Lead and the sole purpose of his role is to oversee the day to day operation for safeguarding; he monitors the progress of all open safeguarding cases and supports Designated Safeguarding and Prevent Officers to ensure that services are engaged rapidly and learners are kept safe. A minimum of three dedicated Designated Safeguarding and Prevent Officers are in place at each centre, all trained to a minimum of Level 3 Designated Persons. Further training and CPD for safeguarding and Prevent is delivered at each company training day, communicated through DSPO E-Bulletins and included in every Quality Meeting. Recent training for DSPOs includes sexual harassment, sexual abuse, consent, self-harm and anxiety. Staff have found these sessions useful and report that it has developed their confidence to deal with learner issues.

Photographs of the DSPOs are displayed on the 'Meet the Team Board' in each centre ensuring that learners and staff (from other centres) can immediately recognise them. All work placements, including those for apprenticeships are subject to thorough risk assessments to evaluate suitability and learners safety. Employers are informed about safeguarding and understand how to report concerns when they arise.

A Prevent risk assessment is in place in line with the principles of the Prevent Statutory Duty and a Prevent action plan with timescales put in place to ensure continued progress. All new staff undertake Safeguarding/Prevent induction training to enable them to identify and respond appropriately to any concerns or incidents and existing staff have refreshers a minimum of once every three years. All centre staff have received WRAP Training refreshers and training on embedding British Values by Marc Inchley (Home Office Trained).

Evidence from student forums and feedback demonstrate that learners within the centres feel safe and use safe working practices. Tutors, support staff and managers build good relationships with learners, which foster respect and trust and enhance the confidence of learners. Learners demonstrate a good awareness of

health and safety including e-safety and secure knowledge and understanding of wider areas such as knife crime, gang culture, bullying etc. These are developed further through information sessions delivered by external partner agencies.

Where risks to learners' wellbeing have been identified, safeguarding processes have been followed and have worked effectively to put in place appropriate measures to protect the wellbeing of learners. Vulnerable learners are identified on centres' ILR reports, so that the progress and achievement can be more closely tracked and monitored by leaders and managers.

Leaders and managers successfully implemented effective quality improvement strategies for the 2020/21 academic year. Consequently, apprenticeship achievement rates are above the national average* with a large proportion of apprentices achieving distinction grades in their end point assessment.

***comparison to the latest available published NARTs data 18/19**

Leaders and managers applied a range of effective methods and have continued to secure quality improvements to the apprenticeship provision. These included: a more robust recruitment and initial assessment phase to ensure apprentices are enrolled onto an appropriate programme; the introduction of an electronic RPL tool to accurately assesses and plan learning programmes more effectively; better tripartite communication between apprentices, employers and assessment coordinators at the start point of the apprenticeship; a rigorous performance management processes implemented by the apprenticeship contract manager and sector leads. Staff CPD activities are plentiful; examples include focused SEND and neurodiversity training, along with the introduction of the Cognassist system which provides broader resources to support apprentices with additional learning needs.

Despite the challenges faced by apprentices in the pandemic, both achievement rates and progression rates have continued to rise in all areas of the apprenticeship provision. In particular, in the 2020/21 academic year, all apprentices on standards in the education and training sector achieved their apprenticeship and across all sectors most apprentices were offered a permanent job, positively progressed to higher level apprenticeship or were promoted.

Areas for Improvement

Leaders need to address disparity in achievement and progression of the following groups:

1. Female learners on study programme – There are gaps in overall QAR achievement for female vs. male learners, whereby female achievement rates are lower than males (13% excluding UK Sports learners and 19% including UK Sports learners where we have a high proportion of high achieving males on programme).
2. 16-18 Year old apprentices, who achieve less well than their counterparts.
3. Reduce disparities in outcomes for learners with mental health conditions and social and emotional difficulties.

The most recent EDIMs Data (Aug 2020 – July 2021) shows that many previous gaps have been reduced or eradicated, especially for learners with SEND and EHCPs. However, new disparities have emerged for the following minority ethnic groups:

- ❖ Black Caribbean
- ❖ White and Caribbean

In analysing this EDIMs report, we have taken into account the impact of Covid-19. To add context, the disparities in the groups that we have identified as underachieving mirror the wider societal picture for example, an independent report from the Commission of Race and Ethnic Disparities note that not all ethnic minority groups are succeeding. In particular, the Commission acknowledges the need to support Black Caribbean, Mixed White and Black Caribbean learners. Data for this year has been affected again by the unavoidable lower achievement levels across the board. For example, where learners could not be teacher assessed and moved on to their next destination before they could complete their programme. We recognise that although some gaps have been eradicated, we will continue to monitor those groups where we know we have seen historical under achievement (for example, dyslexic learners).

Strategies have been implemented to reduce disparity for all groups identified; impact will be closely monitored by senior leaders, managers and the Student Support Manager to ensure that improvements are secured for these specific groups in the next academic year.

A few centres do not sufficiently involve employers in the planning of their curriculum.

There is not enough employer engagement activities at a local level by a minority of managers across the centre network to involve them in planning the curriculum and as a result options for a small minority of learners are limited. In centres where this is good, leaders have built good links with local employers to seek their views on the provision offer and have aligned their offer accordingly. Further work needs to be carried out in the new academic year to secure improvements in this area.

Leaders and managers have yet to secure sufficient improvement to GCSE outcomes.

Published national data from the National Achievement Rates Tables (NARTs - latest available shows achievement rates in 2018/19), evidences that this remains as the biggest challenge facing the sector with only 11% of learners achieving 9-4 English and 10% of learners achieving 9-4 in maths. **NB:** These results are for 16-18 year old learners in the 'Private Sector Public Funded', which compares the achievement of all private Training Providers.

Juniper's GCSE maths and English high grades achievement in 2020/21 is 29% for maths (a 7% increase when compared to 2019/20) and 26% for English (a 6% increase when compared to 2019/20). Due to the nature of Juniper's roll-on roll-off provision, many learners positively progress before sitting their GCSE exams, which significantly impacts upon achievement rates. That aside, the management board recognises that performance is too low and further improvement is required. Therefore, the delivery of GCSEs will continue to be a priority.

Leaders and managers need to further strengthen and stabilise the Building Futures provision.

In response to local skills shortages, Juniper introduced a niche, study programme and apprenticeship roofing provision in the 2019/20 academic year. Despite high achievement rates, and that a high proportion of study programme learners positively progress onto a roofing apprenticeship, it is notably challenging to recruit teachers and assessors that are both qualified and experienced to teach in this field. This has been further compounded by the Covid-19 pandemic and staffing issues, whereby the practical element has been

affected. Leaders and managers are employing strategies to attract well-qualified and experienced tutors and assessors to strengthen the consistency in the quality of education that learners receive and will closely monitor the progress made in the current academic year.