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Newcastle City Learning Self-assessment Report

Academic Year 22/23

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Overview

Newcastle City Learning (NCL) is the post-16 delivery service within Newcastle City Council. Newcastle City Learning works within the context of the city's demographics and priorities. The stated purpose of the service is

"Providing opportunities in Newcastle for all to learn, improve and grow".

Vision

Enabling Newcastle city residents to grow and thrive by providing high-quality, relevant development opportunities, making a difference to the employment chances and lives of all our learners.

Our values

Respect
Teamwork
Integrity
Nurturing
Compassion

Background

Within the City Council, Newcastle City Learning (NCL) sits within the Education and Skills Division of the Children, Education and Skills Directorate. As such, the service feeds directly into the Children, Education and Skills Directorate plan and objectives for 2022-23.

At the heart of the service, is an ethos of supporting the people furthest away from the labour market in the city to develop their skills and confidence to move them closer to the jobs market. The service also provides a range of programmes and activities to allow residents to meet new friends, collaborate through learning and build confidence to enable residents to integrate and take a greater part in community life.

NCL has strong links with a range of partners including Job Centre Plus (JCP), The Council Careers, Advice and Guidance Team, Social Services, North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA), schools and a range of employers with whom it collaborates to provide additional training and support to the residents of the city.

Newcastle sits within the North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA) area and Adult Education Budget (AEB) funding has been devolved from the 2020/21 academic year. NCL continues to work with the leaders of NTCA to ensure that our curriculum meets both the needs of the city and the wider geographical area within the north-east region.

NCL receives funding through the Adult Education Budget (including the former Community Learning element), 16-18 Study Programme, the Apprenticeship levy and Advanced Learning Loans as well as some full cost delivery.

The adult curriculum has a very strong provision in both ESOL and 19+ learners with learning difficulties and disabilities (LLDD). In 21-22 we developed our vocational training offer, to help adults gain qualifications to help them move closer to the jobs market. However, adult interest in vocational training was low in 22-23 and our overall numbers declined. We have, alternatively, seen the development of some new provision within our Employer Responsive provision and interest and numbers in the Level 3 Free Courses for Jobs initiative has grown in 22-23, particularly in the areas of health care and early years practitioner. Curriculum managers continue to look at regional trends to ensure that the curriculum offer remains relevant and meets local priorities.

In the academic year 22-23 the service Head developed the Newcastle City Learning Accountability Agreement which details how we as an organization are working to ensure that our curriculum meets the local needs of both our residents and our employers and major stakeholders. A full copy of this document can be found at <https://www.newcastlecitylearning.ac.uk/sites/default/files/files/NCL%20Accountability%20Agreement%202023-24.pdf> The Head of NCL also sits on the Council's Newcastle Employment Partnership Strategic Committee and has chaired the ESOL Task Group looking to provide a central information service for residents within the city.

The service also provides a range of community learning and recreational learning to support the residents of the city to build confidence and communication and to ensure that adults remain socially integrated, making friends and enjoying learning.

The service offers courses from four main buildings across the city:

- Westgate Community College
- Newcastle Skills Centre (on the Westgate site)
- Heaton Community Centre
- Gosforth Library and Learning Centre.

In addition, NCL delivers programmes of learning to young people aged 16-19. This is an area of the service's provision which continues to develop and grow in numbers.

Context of this self-assessment report

Two years' on from the service's last full Ofsted inspection visit in October 2021, the service continues to grow, and to offer a high standard of educational experiences to its learners. Overall achievement rates have remained high, although there has been a slight decline in both apprenticeships and adult learning. This is linked more to retention than pass rates and the majority of learners who attend education programmes at Newcastle City Learning who stayed until the end of their programmes, passed their planned qualifications. The pass rate in our apprenticeship provision was exceptionally high at 100%.

Overall Effectiveness

This report covers the period of 1 August 2022 to July 31 July 2023. The evidence presented within our self-assessment procedures confirms that the quality of education received by most learners at Newcastle City Learning remains good.

Achievement rates in adult learning have fallen by 2%, due to some specific problems on individual courses. But overall, most adult learners who attend courses at Newcastle City Learning still benefit from very good quality provision and excellent teaching, learning and assessment practices. The level of wrap around support provided to learners is also second to none and allows some of the hardest to reach adults to make progress in their learning, to gain confidence, and become a more active member of their local communities. Adult education continues to provide a wide range of benefits not only to those who participate but also the wider community.

The quality of education received by adult learners, the largest provision type within the service was again judged as good. Ninety-five percent (95%) of those adult learners who stayed until the end of their programme, passed their planned qualifications. There have been many other benefits gained by our adult learners, including increased confidence and resilience, and improved mental-wellbeing which our learners continue to mention in learner feedback surveys and anecdotally to their tutors.

The service also continues to help many to improve their core skills and develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours to enable them to progress or enter the job's market.

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Improved achievement rates in our Programmes for Young People (PYP) have been sustained again in 2022-23, despite the presentation of more and more young people with very complex needs and a huge rise in additional support requirements in social, mental and general wellbeing. The overall achievement rate has risen to 78%.

Our young learners enjoyed a positive experience and continue to develop a wide range of knowledge and employability skills as part of their journey. Last year we increased the number of work-placement opportunities undertaken by our young people. In addition, the outcomes from our English and maths qualifications were improved.

At GCSE level we saw five young people move to achieve grades 4 and 5. Thirteen students gained grades below the threshold but were able to maintain or improve on their previous grades achieved at age 16. There were no unclassified grades awarded this year.

Apprenticeship performance is excellent which was evidenced in the most recent two-day quality review. Whilst overall achievement rates are still impacted by historical retention issues (Currently standing at 65%), the pass rate is 100% which is excellent. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in this area of provision is excellent and as a result apprentices make excellent progress and have a positive impact back in the workplace. Employer feedback also remains extremely complimentary.

Newcastle City Learning continues to provide good quality specialist support to learners of all ages with learning difficulties and disabilities. The college has established itself as a high-quality provider and works in partnership with the council to ensure that learners continue to receive specialist support and education which enables them to make progress against individual targets within their Educational Health Care Plans.

Safeguarding at NCL is effective.

The safety of our staff and learners is of the utmost importance to us. A safeguarding lead and deputy lead for our young learners are identified and have undertaken the required training to fulfill those roles. In addition, we have a safeguarding lead for our adult learners who is also appropriately qualified.

The Chair of the Advisory Board takes the lead responsibility on safeguarding and provides regular support and challenge in this respect.

One trend which is emerging, is one of neglect at home of our young people as the cost of living crisis continues to impact on many young people within the city. At Newcastle City Learning we are very aware of this and look for the signs daily. Our pastoral officers also sensitively deal with regular issues in relation to the impacts of young people living in poverty at home. Where we have concerns that this has reached a certain threshold, we would make referrals to our Council colleagues and seek support on behalf of that child.

NCL carries out safer recruitment practices and provides appropriate training to all staff to ensure that their own knowledge and understanding around how to keep learners safe is updated on a regular basis.

NCL operates a comprehensive recording system called Tootoot to allow the service to record safeguarding concerns and to monitor our response and follow up actions in keeping our learners safe.

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NCL regularly have to deal with safeguarding concerns on behalf of learners within our provision and provide timely and effective responses to all concerns raised.

All learners received information on how to keep themselves safe from the threat of radicalization and the wider threats to their safety, including online safety during induction and throughout their learning programmes.

NCL have positive working relationships with multi-agency support teams within the Council who they can call on for guidance and support should it be required.

Safeguarding remains effective.

Teaching, Learning & Assessment practices

Leaders and managers carried out a number of visits (54) to lessons last academic year to collect evidence of the quality of education within our provision and the findings from those visits has provided evidence for the majority of the following judgements on the quality of experiences of our learners. We also asked our learners to provide feedback about the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and the kind of support they received whilst learners at NCL during those visits and through end of course surveys. The following findings are based on an analysis of that evidence.

Teachers create an environment which is comfortable for learners. In an ESOL class it is noted that learners are clearly enjoying the discussions and lots of lively discussions were observed. In these sessions, learners are relaxed with each other and support each other in their learning. In another ESOL lesson the observer noted a very relaxed and cooperative atmosphere where learners worked together and bounced ideas off each other.

The evidence collected during lesson visits told us that the majority of our learners received a good standard of teaching, learning and assessment. Lessons are generally well planned and use a range of strategies where teachers scaffold learning. In many lessons teachers use questioning effectively to check understanding and to challenge learners to think more deeply about concepts.

In an art lesson, the observer notes that the aims are very clearly explained to the group and the learners know exactly what is expected of them. Whilst the learners are painting, the tutor is constantly monitoring and offering insight and support. In addition, she sees a very collaborative classroom, where the stronger learners openly help the weaker students and as a result the learners make good progress in developing their art skills.

Learners in a maths class were highly motivated and are clearly making good progress. They work proactively and have high expectations of themselves. They feel challenged and work in an environment where the tutor is keen to develop their skills outside of the classroom too. In another maths lesson the tutor's calm approach made the subject more accessible, helping unconfident learners to make good progress and in further class, students used whiteboards to develop their problem-solving skills.

In English lessons the tutor was seen using recapping of prior learning effectively to ensure deep learning. In addition, targeting of quieter learners during the recap, ensures that less confident learners can consolidate their learning. Learners join in lively discussion to develop their language skills.

In Programmes for Young People (PYP) teachers generally manage low level disruption well, allowing learners to stay on task and remain engaged in learning activities. Young learners are regularly given praise and learner progress is recorded in the learner journey booklets, so learners know exactly how well they are doing, including progress against personal targets.

Teachers regularly build in fun learning activities such as a task to build a house of cards, cooking activities and performing arts lessons.

In Apprenticeships the apprentices appreciate the vocational expertise of their tutors and enjoy learning from each other and sharing different approaches to work-based problems.

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Delivery staff at Newcastle City Learning benefitted from a range of professional development support opportunities last year to develop their classroom practice.

A unique project at Newcastle City Learning last year, introduced our teachers and learners to a new model of education named the Thinking Folk Project.

The Thinking Folk project introduced Socratic dialogues to develop learners' critical thinking skills. Data from adult learning lesson visits during the academic year 2021-22 highlighted that critical thinking and questioning were potential areas for development. From the collation of feedback comments, the most frequent development point was to encourage tutors to ask more 'analyse' and 'evaluate' questions. In addition to this, there was a desire to draw upon the rich resource of learners' personal histories that so often emerge in adult learning classes. Rather than critical thinking and questioning as a technique to use in general teaching, the key aim of the project was to explore the philosophical construct of Socratic dialogues as being a vehicle for their facilitation.

Taken from The Thinking Folk Project: Using Socratic Dialogues as a Pedagogical Construct to Develop Language and Meaning by Gary Nicholson (2023) in The Irish Journal of Adult Education.

The Thinking Folk project mostly focused on developing working practices within the ESOL department but also stimulated wider appeal across the service, with CPD (continuous professional development) sessions attended by tutors from a range of subject specialisms. In total, approximately 30 tutors attended sessions, along with external stakeholders who work directly with the black, Asian, or minority ethnic (BAME) community, including the local authority's 'City of Sanctuary' active inclusion team who take a lead role in coordinating the multiple agencies who welcome and support asylum seekers and refugees into the city's community. Records were not kept of the exact number of Socratic dialogue conversations that took place, but it is estimated that from January to July 2022 more than 350 learners participated in more than 100 conversations across multiple venues.

Both learners and tutors gained much from this project, as "*Numerous participants expressed surprise at how 'deep' the conversations became considering the simplicity of the activity*"pg 61. And several tutors commented that "*the conversations frequently created an atmosphere of what they described as 'being in the moment', along with an absence of pressure. One tutor even commented on the liberation they felt from feeling less in control because of the tendency the conversations had to 'meander and surprise'*". Pg 63.

Four of our tutors took part in the Education Training Foundation (ETF) mentoring programme, building their own skills as tutor mentors and helping others to develop their classroom practice across the service.

In addition, we brought in an external trainer to explore the question of outstanding classroom practice and how we might begin to think about how we can support teachers to move towards that level of practice.

Key Weaknesses – Identified in last self-assessment report

Adults

- Less positive achievement performance in 21/22 for: 19+ Learners with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities programme (-4.4% on previous year), Arts (-5.2% on previous year), Teaching Assistants (-5.7% on previous year).

Performance has improved considerably in the art curriculum with the return of a key member of the teaching team and the appointment of a number of new tutors in this area. The achievement rates have also recovered in our Teaching Assistant programme, rising to 75.8%. In the previous year this programme had very much been affected by the inability of students to complete their required work placement hours. This settled last academic year and the tutor has also now re-established better working relationships with local schools willing to support learners with such placements.

The achievement rate for adult learners with learning difficulties and disabilities fell again slightly this year to 86.9% which was mainly down to learners leaving the programme early.

Programmes for Young People

- Too many young people do not access relevant work experience as part of the programme at present.

This year, the percentage of young people who successfully participated in a work placement has increased with better relationships with local employers and also employers being more willing to take on students in this capacity as they now recover from the effects of the pandemic.

- Too many young people do not achieve higher level maths and English qualifications as part of their programme.

The results in GCSE Maths were greatly improved last year. Across both subjects, more young people made better progress in these subjects.

High Needs Learners

- Not all learners are clear about what they want to do and have a good understanding of their career path.

We have recruited a new work placement officer with a focus on supporting learners with high needs to ensure that they are provided with suitable opportunities and choices for work placements to explore what they might progress to following the completion of their studies. This officer will also build relationships with employers who are proactive in recruiting learners with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Behaviour and Attitudes

Attendance has stayed at the same rate as the previous year, across the whole service at 83%. Whilst we recognize that this is lower than we would aspire to, we also recognize that our learners have complex lives outside their studies, and many are first time returners to education. Very often adults have additional caring responsibilities, which will impact on their ability to attend classes regularly. Likewise, many of our young people have not attended school regularly or at all and the transition into regular attendance can be a slow and difficult one.

NCL Overall Attendance-three-year trend

2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
88.76%	82.59%	82.7%

NCL Adult Attendance- three- year trend

2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
89.6%	82.44%	82.6%

NCL Young People Attendance- three-year trend

2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
82.36%	84.22%	83.1%

The behaviour of our adult and apprenticeship learners continues to be excellent.

The behaviour of our young learners is also good, due to the implementation of a new behaviour and expectations policy, and a consistent positive approach. In addition, the constant wrap around support offered by the pastoral officers and programme managers has an impact in setting high expectations in the first term which is then reinforced throughout the year.

Inappropriate behaviour is challenged regularly in the first term by all members of staff. Our expectations for behaviours which will allow learners to move closer to the requirements of employers is a constant theme within our work with these young people. In addition a comprehensive rewards and concern note process is used to monitor and shape the improvement in learner behaviours throughout the academic year.

Our lesson visit evidence indicates that the majority of teachers are able to create a calm and orderly environment for learning across all provision types. A key strength of our provision, continually highlighted within student feedback is the high levels of support received by students from both their tutors and our wider support services. In addition, they repeatedly tell us that the culture within the organization is one of high expectations but also where learners are encouraged to try, make mistakes, learn from mistakes, and grow in confidence as a result.

Newcastle City Learning is good at developing effective learner behaviour and establishing a culture underpinned by British Values. In ESOL, adult learners clearly value the multilingual aspects of the ESOL classroom and how it becomes a mini culture, representative of broader life outside the classroom.

Relationships among learners and staff reflect a positive and respectful culture where the principles of equality and diversity are nurtured. Learners of all ages thrive in a learning culture that celebrates diversity. NCL offers courses for many of the city's most marginalised groups, such as asylum seekers, refugees, vulnerable adults and young people from difficult backgrounds.

Learner feedback supports the view that learners' attitudes to their education are positive. Learners take pride in their learning and demonstrate positive attitudes to each other, tutors, and staff. Learners feel safe at college and feel comfortable about reporting any concerns to their tutor or another member of staff. Concerns have been acted on in a timely way.

In vocational areas tutors use the diversity in their classes by encouraging learners to translate key language into their first languages and share with other learners. Opportunities are taken in some classes to consider cross-cultural similarities and differences in values: in an observed Care Academy lesson a culturally diverse group of learners discussed and shared their personal definitions of equality through sharing their experiences.

Tutors at Newcastle City Learning are good at developing effective relationships with their learners. Apprentices feel safe and have a positive relationship with their tutors.

In Essential Digital courses learners adhere to turn taking, are patient and tolerant and tutor and learners support one another: *She (tutor) helped me to translate English to Thai because I struggle with English vocabulary.*

In Beauty learners have discussions around gender, culture and age, often focussing on product knowledge. Learners work in pairs from different backgrounds as the experience reflects working with clients in salon settings. It is evident from feedback and observation that the tutors create a very cohesive, supporting culture in a very diverse learner demographic: *'The beauty class has given me lots of new experiences'; 'I am absolutely over the moon with all my progress and how confident I now am in my work.'; 'our teacher was patient and friendly with us. I thank the excellent group and dear teacher'.*

All learners in Supporting Teaching and Learning stated that they had developed a greater understanding of different cultures through studying the course.

Learners' attitudes to their education are positive. Learners take pride in their learning and demonstrate positive attitudes to each other, tutors, and staff. Learners feel safe at college and feel comfortable about reporting any concerns to their tutor or another member of staff. Concerns have been acted on in a timely way.

Personal Development

The curriculum offer across all provision types at NCL supports our learners to develop their knowledge and skills, but also to develop a range of wider skills such as building their confidence, resilience, communication and wider social skills.

A further focus across all provision types is to develop employability skills to ensure that our learners move closer to the jobs market. Where learners have told us that their intention is not to move into employment, there is a focus on ensuring that learners can play a full and active part in their families and communities in the future.

In programmes for young people a large portion of the curriculum is focused on the development of their social and emotional confidence as well as ensuring that our learners develop the behaviours required for the workplace. The number of placements obtained to provide real life work experience has increased again this year, giving more learners an opportunity to further develop their employability skills. The team have also worked hard to widen the variety of placements available to our young people to ensure that they are able to try out various options. The curriculum also ensures that our young people receive input on how to keep themselves safe in modern Britain and other relevant topics, for example they have received input on gang culture and knife crime.

In adult learning, the NCL curriculum extends beyond the academic/technical/vocational and provides for learners' broader development, enabling them to develop and discover their interests and talents. For example they go out on cultural visits.

The 'Dream, Discover, Do' programme provides a route for individuals back into employment. It builds self-esteem and confidence and prepares individuals to move back into learning and or employment.

The Thinking Folk project continues to provide our learners with an opportunity to take part in higher order thinking and conversation. Socratic dialogues are used as a pedagogical construct for tutors to develop learners' critical thinking skills by drawing on their lived experiences and enabling them to recognise the common bonds that make us all human. Learners across the service continue to take part in these events allowing them to stretch their language skills, their cognitive skills and take part in lively debate.

The provider prepares learners for future success in education, employment or training by providing unbiased relevant careers guidance and opportunities within the world of work. We recognise that volunteering is an important pathway for some learners in helping them prepare for paid employment. The service continues to offer the passport to volunteering as an additionality for our adult learners with a further sixty-one adults completing this programme last year.

Partners such as Jet North are particularly valuable given the focus on ESOL learners for pastoral and careers support and the organisation recognises that NCL enables it to achieve its targets so mutual cooperation is essential.

Learners at NCL understand how to keep themselves and their peers safe and who to report any concerns to. They receive comprehensive training on the varied risks to their safety in modern Britain. They are familiar with the risks of radicalization and extremism that they might be exposed to in the north east.

Newcastle City Learning promotes a highly inclusive environment where all learners are valued.

“Learners of all ages thrive in a learning culture that celebrates diversity. NCL offers courses for many of the city’s most marginalised groups, such as asylum seekers, refugees, vulnerable adults and young people from difficult backgrounds. Staff promote and value the aspirations of all learners, irrespective of their backgrounds.” (Ofsted 2021)

Learners aged from 16 to 19, learners with high needs and adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities get opportunities to develop their physical health through exercise programmes on the campus playing fields. They also receive support developing safe and consensual relationships with their peers.

The service continues to provide learners with ongoing impartial advice and guidance. All ESOL learners have access to an external specialised agency which provides both pastoral and career advice. English and maths learners have access to formal career guidance through the National Careers Service.

The Community Learning offer pulls marginalised learners back into learning through tailor made courses, often offered in community venues and it provides a steppingstone for learners to join mainstream provision. NCL also uses Community Learning funding to improve residents’ wellbeing – through Arts, we deliver Pain Pals courses at GP surgeries to people with low confidence who often suffer from pain, anxiety or isolation. They claim that the course has a significant positive impact on their lives: *‘We are all frightened to be in groups...but now we have this (arts) group and it’s just brilliant’ ; ‘it’s changed my life’; ‘it’s my little lifeline, I look forward to it so much’; ‘in terms of my mental health, it’s been really beneficial’; ‘it’s very therapeutic, that’s why I like it’; ‘it’s a distraction from the pain’; it should be put on the NHS...it’s that powerful’*

Family Learning programmes, delivering ESOL in schools, have successfully been re-introduced to 5 schools in Newcastle. These programmes have a significant impact on both the parents and the school, as it eases communication but also build more cohesive communities.

The Dream Discover Do programme provide disadvantaged, long term unemployed learners with the skills and confidence to return to work: *‘the course was great thanks to the range of different tutors, their input and ideas as well as other participants. Being with such positive people who have overcome or are overcoming their doubts and fears has taught me to accept changes in my own confidence and to never give up.’*

Learners on the level 2 and 3 Supporting Teaching and Learning say that studying the course had significantly improved their confidence and ability to study independently.

In 22/23 we provided courses to more than a 100 Learners with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities. There are good examples of collaborative learning and learners support each other in becoming independent learners: *'I'm a lot more confident and independent than I was before.; I have made new friends. I like working with them'*. They are taught ESOL, independent learning, maths, drama and art courses tailored to meet needs stipulated on EHCP plans.

Partners such as Jet North are particularly valuable, given the focus on pastoral and careers support for ESOL learners, as is the National Careers service.

Leadership and Management

The leadership, management and governance continue to evolve to support an ever-changing service with a full re-structure of the leadership and management taking place in the summer of 2022.

Leaders and managers continue to look to ways to balance the demands to deliver high-quality education, against a background of more and more challenging financial constraints.

Leaders and managers have continued to develop the curriculum offer to meet the changing needs of our residents, employers and stakeholders. Leaders regularly consult with the North of Tyne Combined Authority to ensure that our curriculum offer remains aligned with their strategic priorities as well as keeping abreast of employer and resident needs from within the city of Newcastle upon Tyne. The Head of NCL regularly attends external meeting with both North of Tyne Combined Authority and the Council to ensure that the service is kept informed of changes in need and priorities from our main stakeholders and to ensure that we continue to provide training which is in line with local skills plans.

Leaders have a clear and ambitious vision for providing high-quality, inclusive education and training to all. NCL provides clear leadership for its staff with very good direction, communication, and decision making. Managers felt they had autonomy and flexibility to be creative within a clear set of values and accountability.

Managers work with partners in the council to ensure our curriculum meets the needs of Newcastle residents and addresses the skills gap. Our Care Academy was set up in conjunction with Newcastle City Council Adult Social Care and helps to fill current vacancies in the sector. Leaders focus on improving teachers' subject and teaching knowledge to enhance the teaching of the curriculum. The practice, subject knowledge and up-to-date vocational expertise of staff build and improve over time. The Advanced Practitioners group will support tutors to enhance their teaching through constructive lesson visits and CPD. The ETF programme sponsored mentoring programme trained 10 tutors over two years to be mentors who will support the development of teaching staff.

Two MFL tutors are currently undertaking a CELTA (Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults) qualification which would help NCL meet the high ESOL demand in the city. Senior managers are also involved in an ESOL Task group in order to provide for more learners in the city.

Leaders engage effectively with their community, employers, local services and organisations responsible for local and regional economic planning. The content of ESOL, Care Academy, Volunteer Passport and Community Learning curriculums clearly reflect the collaborations with JCP, Health Care and the voluntary sector.

Leaders focus on improving teachers' subject and teaching knowledge to enhance the teaching of the curriculum. The practice, subject knowledge and up-to-date vocational expertise of staff build and improve over time. This includes their expertise in remote education. Newcastle City Learning promotes a professional development culture that recognises tutor expertise and collaboration as opposed to a management trickle down approach. The Peer Enhancement Programme (PEP) has successfully engaged over twenty-five staff members in action research communities of practice. The ETF programme sponsored mentoring programme trained 5 tutors to be mentors and 17 mentees benefitted – there is a clear indication that those involved in both PEP and ETF have improved their practice

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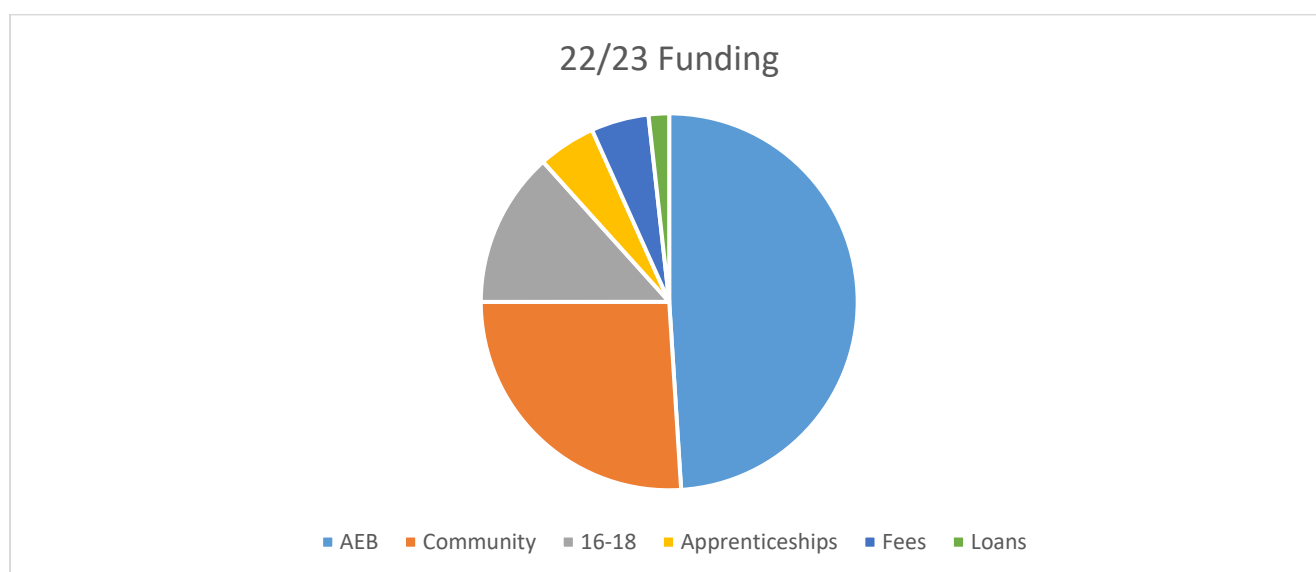
Regular Curriculum Progress Review meetings closely monitor progress against both quality and financial targets during the academic year. Middle managers are challenged within those meetings to address issues in a timely way, allowing appropriate interventions to be implemented.

Leaders and managers continue to be very conscious of tutor workload in unprecedented circumstances, but it has been difficult to prevent workloads from increasing with continued financial pressures. Leaders and managers have therefore had to be very aware of the possible impacts on staff well-being and keep regular checks on staff and make referrals to occupational health where appropriate.

Governance – NCL Advisory Board

The service had a long-standing membership providing governance, support and challenge to the service. The governance of the service underwent a full review during the academic year 20-21 and a new Advisory Board was established with clear job descriptions being issued to all board members. This has further evolved during 2021-22. However, it remains a challenge to retain new Board members and ensure some consistency of Board membership.

Our funding



The largest funding stream is or Adult Education Budget (AEB) and Community Learning funding which is devolved through the North of Tyne Combined Authority.

We continue to look for alternative funding streams to ensure the sustainability of the service moving forward.

Provision Types

Adult Learners – Self-Assessment Author: Hardus du Plessis

Quality of Education

Newcastle City Learning's (NCL) adult provision offers high quality education and the achievement rate of 89%.

Curriculums are ambitious, meet local needs and designed to give learners the knowledge and skills they need to succeed. The ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) curriculum is the largest area with 681 learners in 22/23, around half mandated from Jobcentre Plus and in addition to English, covers work related skills and lexis to help learners into work.

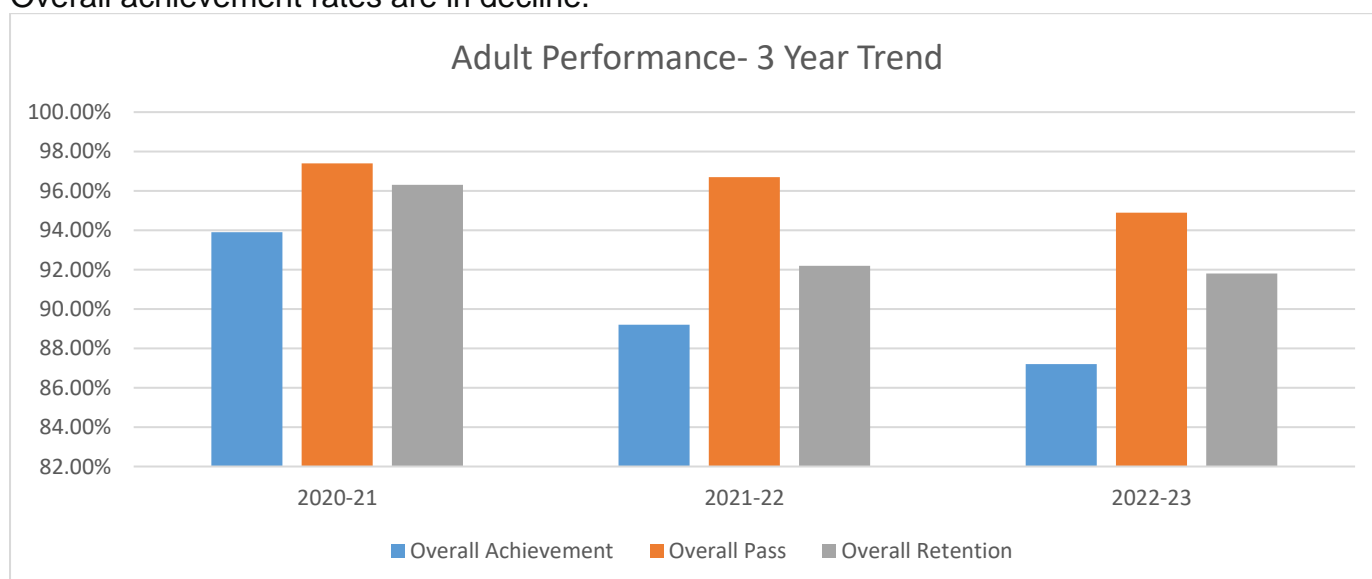
Seventy-three per cent of learners felt more job ready as result of their ESOL course: this is significant as some of the more disadvantaged ESOL learners are not literate in their first language and more than 20% enter our provision at a pre-entry level.

The Level 3-5 qualifications in Beauty, Counselling, Supporting Teaching and Learning (STL), Accountancy and Health and Social Care prepare learners for work. Teachers are well qualified and have expert knowledge of the subjects they teach as they are also qualified practitioners.

22/23 Adult Learning performance

Year	Overall Achievement	Overall Pass	Overall Retention
2020-21	93.9%	97.4%	96.3%
2021-22	89.2%	96.7%	92.2%
2022-23	89.1%	95%	93.8%

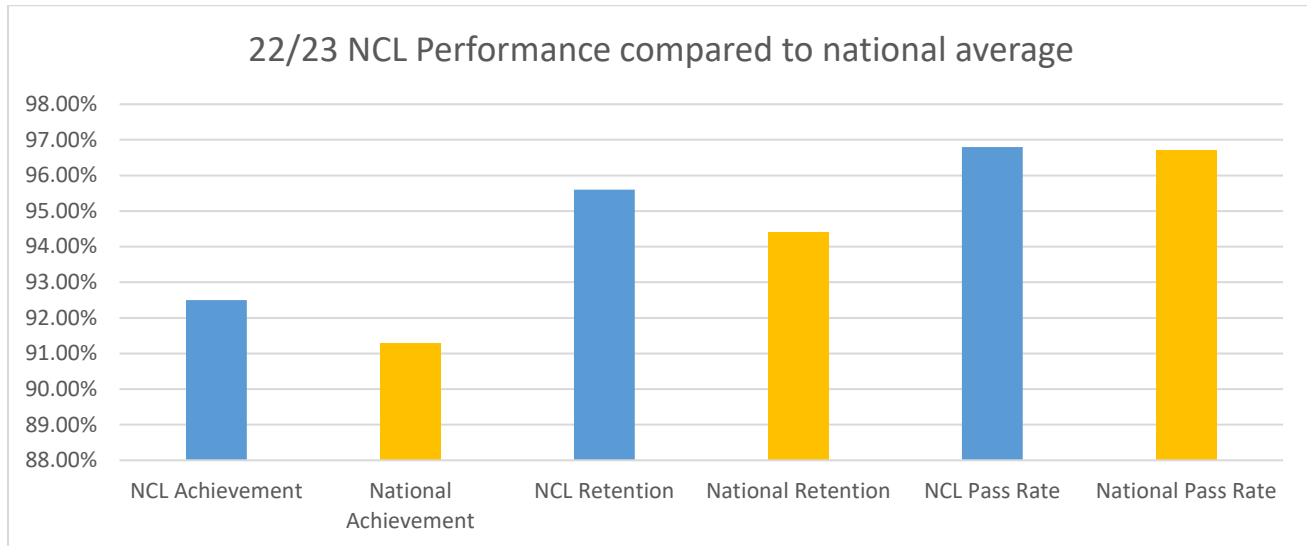
Overall achievement rates are in decline.



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22/23 compared with national averages

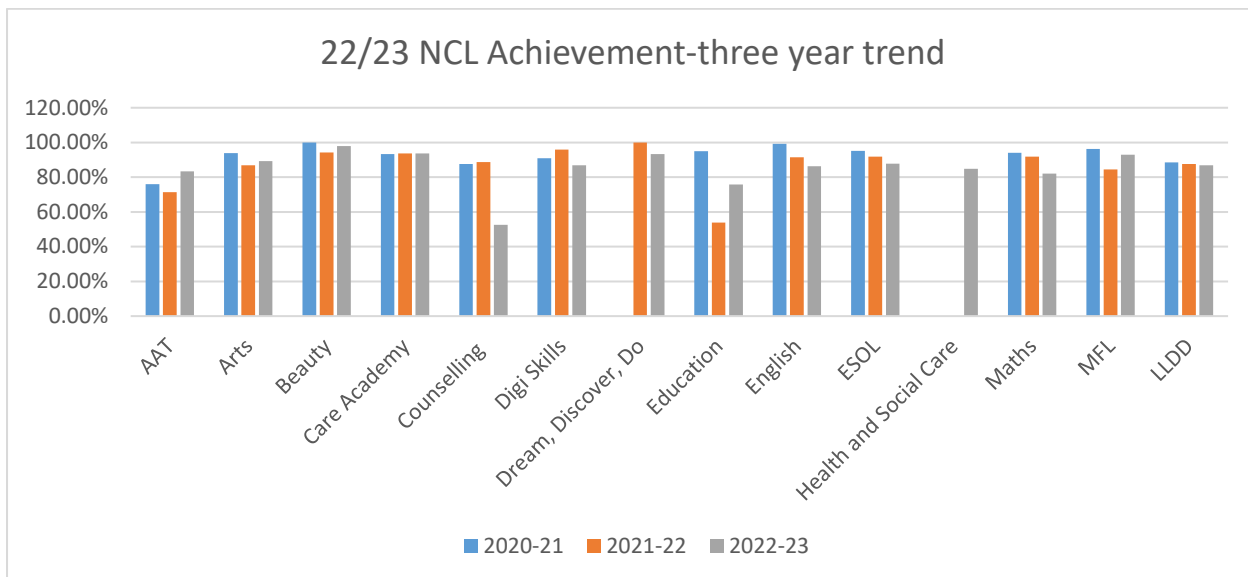
NCL Achievement	National Achievement	NCL Retention	National Retention	NCL Pass Rate	National Pass Rate
89		94		95	



2022-23 Adult Achievement by curriculum area

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
AAT	75.9%	71.4%	83.30%
Arts	93.8%	86.8%	89.2%
Beauty	100%	94.30%	97.9%
Care Academy	93.3%	93.7%	93.7%
Counselling	87.6%	88.7%	52.5%
Digi Skills	90.9%	95.9%	86.9%
Dream, Discover, Do	0%	100%	93.3%
Education	95%	53.8%	75.8%
English	99.3%	91.5%	86.3%
ESOL	95.2%	91.8%	87.8%
Health and Social Care	0%	0%	84.8%
Maths	94.1%	91.9%	82.1%
MFL	96.3%	84.4%	92.9%
LLDD	88.6%	87.6%	86.9%

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Whilst this year the performance in some areas has improved, such as art and Teaching Assistants, in other areas achievement rates have fallen. Whilst the increase in Teaching Assistants is positive, the achievement rate is still much lower than the national average and should be higher.

There has been a sharp decline in the performance within our Counselling provision due to a large number of early withdrawals from the programme last year. As a result our recruitment and initial assessment procedures for this programme are to be reviewed and strengthened.

In addition, the steady smaller decline in our adults with learning difficulties and disabilities needs achievement rates will require close attention to stop any further decline in future years. We have seen an increase in numbers in this area, and often learners come with complex medical backgrounds. However, this needs to be closely monitored in the new academic year.

Implementation

Maths and English courses address gaps in numeracy and literacy needs in the city and help learners progress at work: *'The course (English) helped me to show employers I am serious about career progression, and commitment to making a better life for myself and others I work with. It's helped me to become more competent in the workplace.'* Maths lessons are interesting and challenging, as evidenced within Lesson Visit feedback, by the range of resources used, the classroom atmosphere, levels of learner engagement, motivation and learner feedback.

Teachers design activities which learners remember the content they have been taught, integrate new knowledge into larger concepts and apply skills fluently and independently. Deep learning is evident in maths as learners make connections between different mathematical topics and how concepts could be applied in real life. Modern Foreign Language curriculums offer gradual development of lexis so that the sequencing allows for long term acquisition of skills and knowledge.

Supporting Teaching and Learning learners claim in learner feedback surveys that teaching is effective, relevant and inclusive. Learner surveys highlight the variety of approaches and effective feedback and feedforward that supports them to improve their skills.

Teachers and leaders use assessment well. In ESOL, maths and English initial starting points are captured well, and clear links can be seen between learners' RAG rated skills scans and the planned delivery. The Beauty curriculum has adapted written assessment activities to be multiple choice to provide a more targeted assessment of ESOL learners' understanding.

In Modern Foreign Languages support is consistently provided to allow disadvantaged learners to succeed and the most able are appropriately challenged. Google classroom is used well to lend support and offer differentiated activities. Older learners benefit greatly from learning another language: *'The course has helped me feel confident using another language. Excellent for keeping my brain active as I get older.'*

As Business, Bookkeeping and Accounting are vocational courses, transferrable skills such as digital record keeping are encouraged and examples are given in lessons which are relevant to modern working environments.

Ninety percent of observed lessons have been judged as providing good or better learning opportunities by managers from within the service. We have also seen this academic year a small number of lessons which evidenced outstanding learning opportunities.

The NCL curriculum extends beyond the academic/technical/vocational and provides learners' broader development, enabling them to develop and discover their interests and talents.

Improvement plan

Provision Type – Adult Learning		
	Issue	Action Required
Curriculum Intent	Continue to develop curriculum to meet changing needs within the city.	Continue to provide suitable training to tutors who wish to diversify teaching, especially to meet the continuous growing demand for ESOL. Enable tutors to develop and deliver essential, new curriculums like Hospitality, where job vacancies in the city are high.
Curriculum intent	Better partnership working and dissemination of employment and training priorities data from regional organisations such as the LEP	Continue to work with partners and employers to identify what training residents need and offer an adult curriculum informed by the city-wide Skills Plan.

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Curriculum intent	Ensure sufficient funding through AEB budget	Work closely with NEMCA and other providers to ensure region works effectively to deliver the right curriculum in the right areas.
Curriculum Intent	Community Learning	<p>Although NCL is now demonstrating better value for money (£47.00 claimed for CL learning per hour), an extremely focussed strategy required in 22/23 to ensure Community Learning spending is valued and targeting communities where impact is greatest. The funding is under review and could become formula funded in 23/24, so NCL needs to demonstrate very effective use of this money. Deployment of staff, spending and nature of learning activities to be under constant review.</p> <p>Ensure management structures and governance in place to achieve the above, and that the dedicated CQL has the resources and time to work with partners and develop the curriculum.</p>
Curriculum Implementation	Too few lessons are judged as outstanding	Continue to offer a wide range of continuous professional development opportunities to our teachers and wider workforce to work towards the delivery of more outstanding lessons. Ensure lesson visits lead to teacher development and are not only a judgement tool, as most NCL tutors' performance is already established: we need to determine what tutors need to learn to move to outstanding and deliver the necessary input. Coaching and mentoring is integral to this.
Curriculum Implementation	The key weakness identified in our recent Ofsted visit was the lack of investment in the internal and external fabric and facilities or the buildings used by adult learners so that they can	<p>Lobby Council to support NCL financially to improve the internal and external fabric of the facilities and building at Westgate College.</p> <p>To continue to invest, where possible financially in updating the classroom environments within both Westgate and the Skills Centre buildings.</p>

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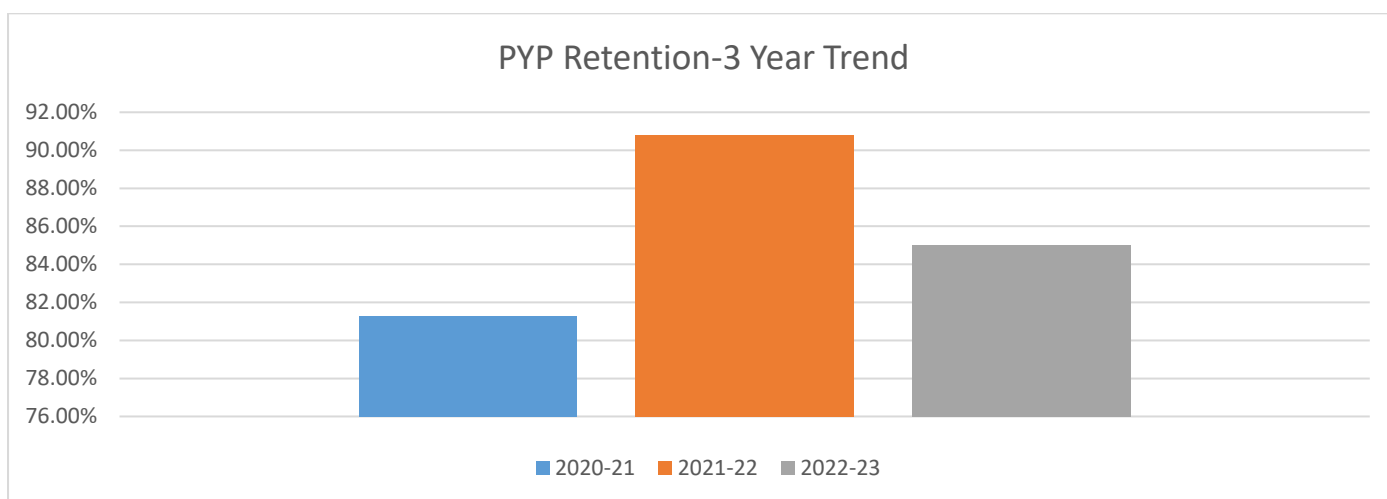
	enjoy a more comfortable and inspiring learning environment.	
Curriculum impact	<p>Improve overall achievement by 2.8% to 90%</p> <p>Improve Counselling: 19 learners, 52.5% achievement.</p> <p>Improve Education</p>	<p>All areas, apart from Arts, Beauty and Business Admin, have lower performance rates than in 21/22, and an overall drop of 2% to 87.2%. A focus on more effective use of NRL learning (as pass rate still very high for regulated learning) should enable general recovery.</p> <p>Review and monitor counselling curriculum throughout the year, both in terms of viability and performance. Robustly review all withdrawals (retention 52.5%) and intervene in a timely fashion.</p> <p>9.9% drop from 21/22 to 75.8%: this is due to placements not being completed: focus on early arrangement with schools.</p>
Curriculum Impact	Limited evidence held currently of impact of learning, and final destinations of our adult learners from last year.	<p>Review of destination data collection systems.</p> <p>Introduce more regular surveys for learners who complete or withdraw, to capture the destination evidence</p>

Programmes for Young People - Self-assessment

Author: Colleen Pittman

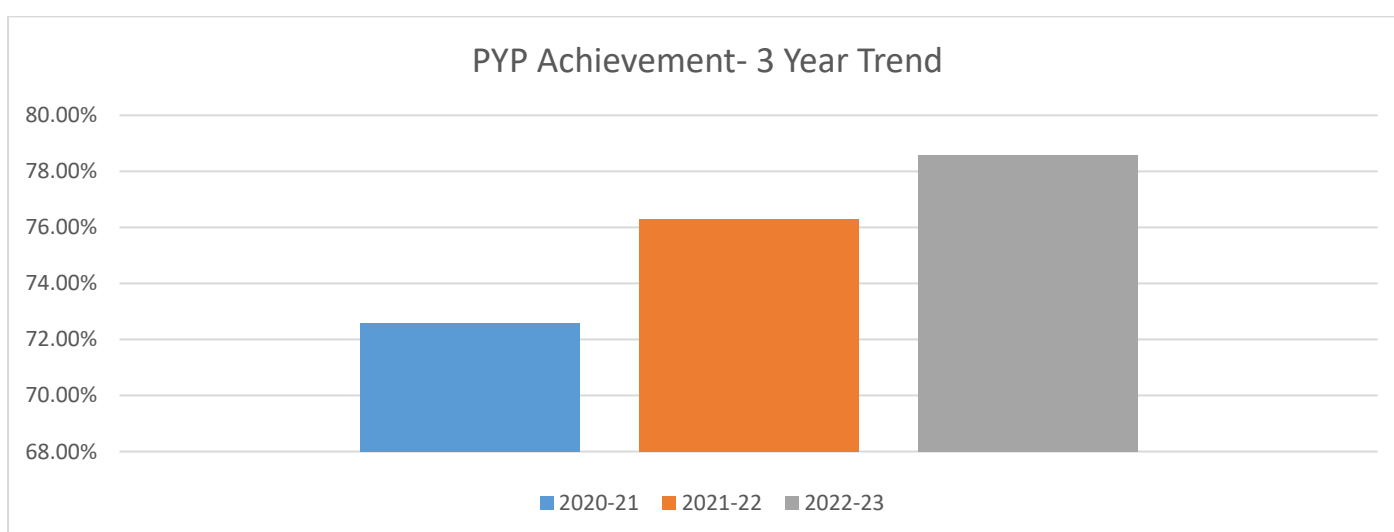
NCL PYP Retention- three-year trend

2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
81.3%	90.8%	85%



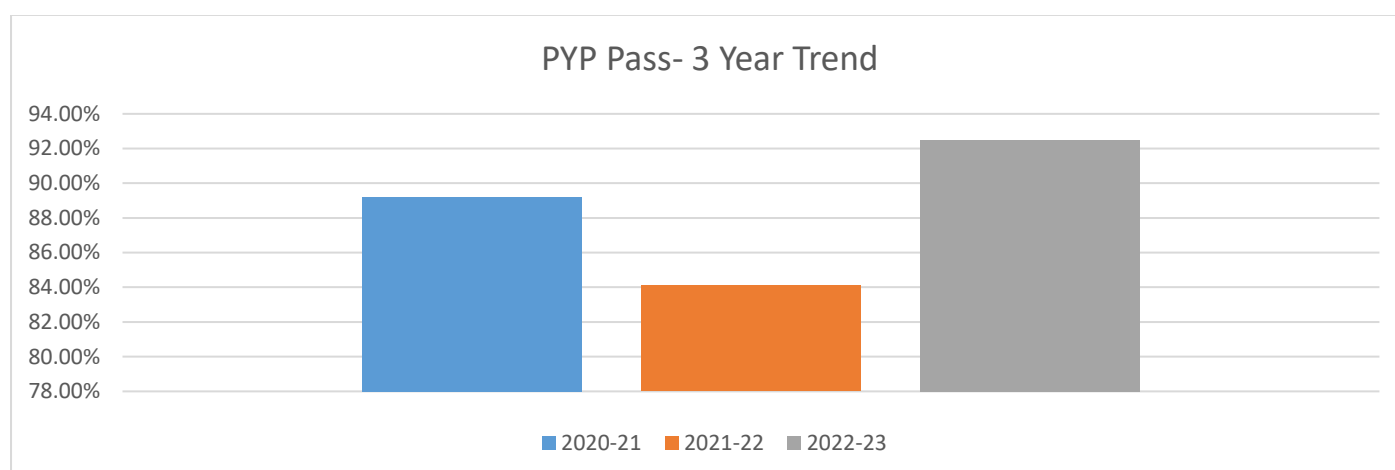
NCL PYP Achievement- three-year trend

2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
72.6%	76.3%	78.6%



NCL PYP Pass Rate- three-year trend

2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
89.2%	84.1%	92.5%



Programmes for Young People is graded as Good. Quality of education is judged as good in this area of provision. In 2022/23 there was a 93% pass rate and an achievement rate of 78%.

Programmes are individualised to meet the needs of each learner. Individual Learner Journeys identified that learners developed a wide range of social, emotional and employability skills which will support them to progress further into higher level study or employment.

There is a high quality and inclusive curriculum offer. Lessons are well planned and sequenced to develop and build upon prior knowledge and skills. Programmes are designed well to meet the aspirations and challenges of the young people on programme and the needs of employers. Current labour market intelligence is used to identify local job opportunities and plan a curriculum with vocational pathways that meet the needs of learners and employers. For example a pathway in an introduction to construction has been further developed.

Initial assessment and diagnostics are used effectively to identify starting points and inform the planning of lessons that stretch and challenge all learners.

Lesson visits identified that tutors use a range of effective strategies that result in learners retaining knowledge and applying practical skills development. High quality and engaging resources are used by tutors to support learning and progression. Brief and debrief sessions are used to effectively deploy LSA's to meet learner needs.

Lesson plans identified the use of a range of formative and summative assessment methods for learning. In the majority of Individual Learner Journeys, feedback was timely and constructive and enabled learners to build knowledge and skills and progress.

Lesson visits show that the learning environment is conducive to learning and tutors have high expectations of all learners. Enrichment activities are designed and well

planned to enhance the educational experience and offer learners opportunities for personal growth, skill development and a broader understanding of the world. Activities are carefully chosen to contribute to character development by teaching values such as perseverance, discipline and integrity.

The delivery of the Key+ Project was very successful and supported learners to gain new experiences and build their skills and confidence. Learners were grouped and progressed through a five-step process of thinking, planning (including a budget), pitching (dragon den style), doing and reviewing. Learners were supported to choose projects that were safe and developed relevant skills. Projects included a cinema trip, meal at a local restaurant and go karting. At the end of this project, learners attended a red-carpet event at the Copthorne Hotel to celebrate their success and achievements.

Learners attended Dukehousewood for an outward bound trip. The activities were designed and chosen to develop confidence, resilience, teamwork and social skills. Feedback and reflections from learners were very positive. Learners reported that participation in the activities had been a transformative experience that equipped them with a broad range of skills and attributes that contributed to their personal and professional growth and wellbeing.

As many learners had not experienced any time away from their community it also gave them an appreciation for the outdoors. The staff at Dukehousewood praised the behaviour and maturity of our learners who had attended.

For young adults who remained on programme, English and maths outcomes were good. Overall, there was a 90% pass rate for English and 94% pass rate for maths. Adaptations to the GCSE delivery models, resulted in the highest grade profile achieved to date; some young adults achieved a grade 4 or 5.

In most English and maths sessions, teachers have high aspirations for their learners and teaching is well sequenced and structured. For the majority of young adults, starting points are identified accurately and used to inform planning well. Teachers use a wide range of resources to motivate and engage learners. Checks on learning are good and the majority of tutors use effective questioning techniques. A few tutors need to explore the use of questioning to promote deeper learning. All work is regularly marked and SPaG feedback given. Many learners are motivated, and some are able to identify and reflect on their own progress, to identify areas of further development.

Safeguarding is excellent. Feedback from learners identifies that they feel safe and supported both inside and outside of college, which has had a positive impact upon their learning. Through the use of Tootoot, robust processes and procedures are in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all learners. Wraparound pastoral support is excellent. Swift interventions by the Pastoral team and CQL staff have ensured targeted support and engagement with external agencies to further support when necessary. Tootoot is used timely and effectively to manage and monitor safeguarding alerts. Attendance and punctuality are good and improving. Non-attendance and poor punctuality issues are quickly addressed, often involving parents/carers and the support of other agencies when appropriate.

Learners are provided with information, advice and guidance and this is consistent at key points throughout the duration of the programme.

Work experience opportunities meet the needs and aspirations of learners in a variety of sectors. 67% of learners attended at least one work experience opportunity. This is an increase of 22% from 21/22. These valuable opportunities enabled learners to gain and develop core employability skills and increased confidence as a result of their experiences. Joint working practices across the PYP and Employer Led teams has resulted in an increase in employers offering high quality work experience opportunities.

Feedback from learners shows that they feel they have developed confidence and employability skills whilst attending the programme. They also identify that they have a wider knowledge of other cultures within their community which has fostered a sense of unity and inclusion amongst the learners and has created strong and harmonious relationships within college.

Areas for Improvement moving forward – Young People

Provision Type – Programmes for Young People		
	Issue	Action Required
Curriculum implementation	Too many young people do not access relevant work experience as part of the programme at present.	A new role has been established within the team from 1 September 2021 with a view to increasing the number of suitable placements available to those who are ready to undertake work experience.
Curriculum implementation	Too many young people do not achieve higher level maths and English qualifications as part of their programme.	<p>Redesign of the beginning of the Autumn term for M&E team to develop relationships and rapport before delivery of the curriculum commences.</p> <p>Issues with a difference between prior achievement information and initial assessment findings will continue to be an issue.</p> <p>Making is very difficult to measure real distance travelled in these core subjects.</p>
Curriculum impact	Whilst overall achievement rates have greatly improved. Still too many of our young people fail to achieve their planned qualifications	Pathways have been designed to ensure a broad curriculum which is attractive and responds to the needs of our young people and local employers.

		<p>Greater use of pastoral within vocational sessions at the beginning of the academic year to build relationships and rapport and ensure that learners are settled early and ready to learn.</p> <p>Pastoral Support/Counselling Officer in place 8/12/21 to further support the team with emotional and behavioral challenges which may impact on learner progress.</p>
Financial stability	Impact of COVID 19 – we have now had two years of far lower numbers on the ESFA funded PYP programme which will have an impact on future funding.	Leaders and managers continue to closely monitor the financial position of the Department, including the staffing structure to support this very valuable aspect of our provision.

High Needs - Self-assessment

Author: Sam Riley

Quality of education is judged as good for high needs learners. Learners identified as attracting high needs funding and requiring additional support within their learning are assessed at enrolment and their Education Health Plans (EHCP) reviewed to ensure that Newcastle City Learning is the right provision to help them develop and move forward. Young learners are then integrated very much into our mainstream Programme for Young People and as a result the majority of learners achieve and progress well.

Schemes of learning are sequenced and structured to develop constructive knowledge and skills and they are informed by Labour Market Information. Learners with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and high needs are able to access an ambitious pathway to suit the needs of the individual and enable them to achieve their aspirations and EHCP targets.

Supported Interns are highly supported to access relevant work placements alongside their college timetable. Tutors identify learning individual starting points through thorough initial assessment and use starting points successfully to plan and deliver lessons that will stretch and challenge all learners.

Curriculum is well planned to ensure that the preparing for adulthood agenda is incorporated on all of the young people's programmes. Enrichment offers activities learners have not experienced before.

Success is celebrated through regular reviews, which ensure that learners with high needs fully understand the progress they are making over time. Within the vocational subjects, tutors use activities which promote repetition ensuring learners with SEND and High needs can remember content and apply skills independently.

The behaviours and attitudes displayed by high needs learners in lessons is outstanding. Young people like the way they are treated as adults by all staff, they respond positively to the high standards that they are expected to observe in terms of their behaviour in classrooms, and around campus. As a result, levels of attendance and punctuality are excellent.

Leaders and managers use high needs funding appropriately to develop and provide challenging, personalised learning programmes that promote the progressive development of learners' knowledge, skills and behaviours. The programmes focus well on enhancing learners' employability skills and promoting their independence and autonomy.

Areas for Improvement moving forward – Young People

Provision Type – High Needs		
	Issue	Action Required
Progression	We know what happens to our learners when they leave us, but we do not continue to monitor/check this at 6 and 12 months to ensure YP still in position.	Team to develop system for long term progress tracking.
Curriculum implementation	Not all young people were able to take up a work placement opportunity.	Increase work placement activity from term 1 to ensure all high needs/EHCP learners can attend if appropriate for them to do so. Continue to identify new employers and WP opportunities.
Progression opportunities	Not all learners are clear about what they want to do and have a good understanding of their career path	Increased IAG directly connected with work placements to capture early any changes in career path. Increased variety of quality work placements
Curriculum implementation	SI's need to be in the workplace for the majority of the week to ensure they get a realistic picture of employment.	Delivery of the curriculum to return to on site at employers (pre – Covid)

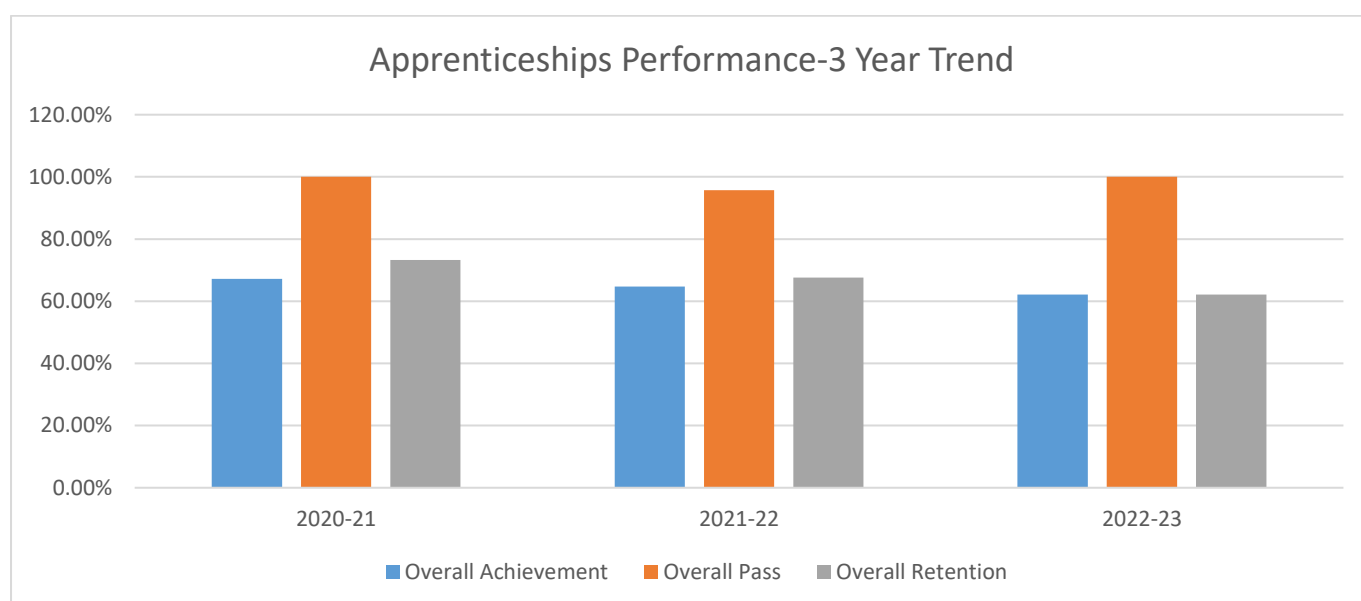
Employer Responsive Provision- Self-assessment

Author: Cara Hetherington

The Employer-Led team continues to go from strength to strength. The apprenticeship provision has shown measurable improvement from 21-22 and the introduction of the AEB 'Free Courses for Job's' offer in 22-23 has improved the sustainability of the team.

Overall performance figures for Apprenticeships three-year trend

Year	Overall Achievement	Overall Pass	Overall Retention
2020-21	67.2%	100%	73.3%
2021-22	64.7%	95.7%	67.6%
2022-23	65%	100%	65%



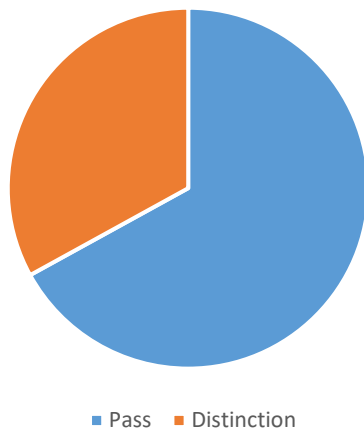
The overall achievement rate for apprenticeship provision currently stands at 65% (+11.6%) against a national rate of 53.4%

Pass/Distinction Standards

Pass	Distinction
67%	33%

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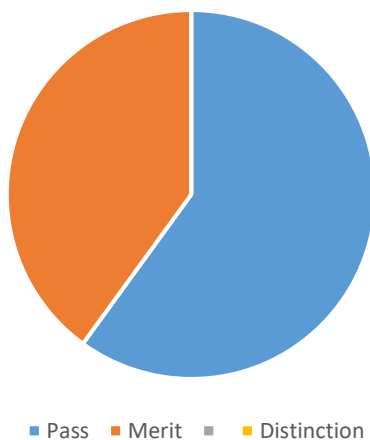
Pass/ Distinction Standards



Pass, Merit/ Distinction Standards

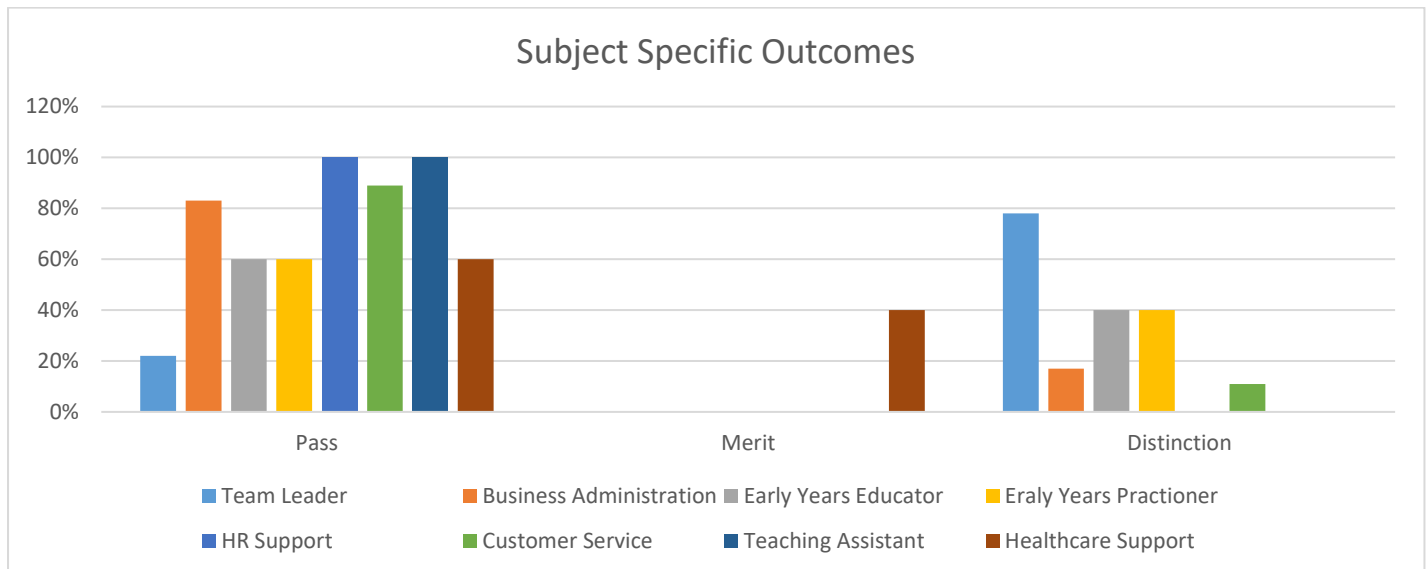
Pass	Merit	Distinction
60%	40%	0%

Pass, Merit/ Distinction Standards



Subject Specific Outcomes

	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Team Leader	22%	n/a	78%
Business Administration	83%	n/a	17%
Early Years Educator	60%	n/a	40%
Early Years Practitioner	60%	n/a	40%
HR Support	100%	n/a	0%
Customer Service	89%	n/a	11%
Teaching Assistant	100%	n/a	0%
Healthcare Support	60%	40%	0%



Much of our outcome data, per subject, is based on small group sizes. Some as small as 2. For instance, the Business Administration Level 3 is based only on 7 learners making our 1 non achievement 14%.

*It is far more reliable to measure our progress against the overall outcome data than the standard specific outcome data.

Apprenticeships

Quality of learning is good. Within apprenticeships the vast majority of learners are making excellent progress, and this is reflected in high achievement rates. Apprenticeship standards continue to be chosen to enable learners to seek permanent employment opportunities and to meet the needs of the local labour market. Training is meaningfully planned in tripartite with the apprentice, tutor and employer and reviewed at frequent intervals throughout the apprenticeship. More learners than ever go on to achieve Distinction at End-Point Assessment with particular success in the Team Leader standard with 78% of achievers gaining a Distinction.

Initial assessment is robust and has improved from 21-22. English and maths, initial and diagnostic, assessments are used effectively to identify starting points and provide individualised support. Skills Scans and Apprentice Learning Plans identify starting points and are used to plan teaching and off-the-job training in tripartite with the employer. Subject specific initial assessments are used to increase the tutor's knowledge of the onboarding apprentice to provide meaningful teaching and learning.

Lesson visits demonstrate strong performance by tutors. Tutors use a range of activities to facilitate learning and engage their learners. There is clear evidence of the effective use of formative assessment strategies to check learning. Learners show respect for both their tutor and peers in lessons and enjoy learning. Learners make good progress in developing new knowledge, skills and behaviours.

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Apprentice levels of achievement are high. 100% of learners that complete their practical period go on to achieve their overall apprenticeship standard. Learners that work towards English and maths as part of their apprenticeship demonstrate high levels of attendance and all go on to achieve their qualification.

Apprentices and employers received good information, advice and guidance (IAG). The Business Development Officer has now been in post for a full academic year which has enabled consistency in the IAG being provided. Employers engage in a training needs analysis and receive targeted IAG based on this. Potential apprentices receive initial IAG from the Business Development Office and further advice from a subject specialist tutor at Skills Scan and Apprentice Learning Plan meetings. Apprentices and employers continue to receive IAG throughout the apprenticeship during pre-planned progress reviews.

Employer-Led AEB provision

Quality of learning is good. All learners are making good progress and retention rates are high. Qualifications have been chosen to support the needs of the local labour market and enable learners to seek permanent employment opportunities in the Early Years and Health and Social Care sectors.

Initial assessment is robust and meaningful. All learners complete English, maths and subject specific initial assessments as well as participating in a skills scans meeting with a sector specialist. Initial assessments and skills scans are used effectively to identify starting points and plan individualised teaching and learning.

Tutors use a range of exciting and engaging activities to bring learning to life. The classroom environment is lively and classroom management is consistent. Tutors use effective formative assessment to check learning. Learning is consistently related back to the workplace with all learners employed in their chosen sector prior to enrolment. It is evident that learners are making good progress and developing new knowledge and skills that they apply to the workplace.

Employer-led AEB courses are designed and delivered to meet the needs of local employers. Both employers and learners receive good IAG. Employers participate in a training needs analysis and receive IAG based on this. Learners are predominantly referred to us by their employer and receive IAG from the Business Development Officer and sector specialist prior to enrolment. Employers and learners receive continuing IAG through regular tutorials, workplace visits and informal progress reviews.

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