

The Supply of Education and Training in Cheshire and Warrington

FINAL REPORT (JULY 2020)

BRENNAN WILSON LTD

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1. Introduction

This report has been produced as one of several commissioned by Cheshire and Warrington LEP in phase 2 of its Labour Market Intelligence programme. These reports will cover the following themes:

- The supply of training and education
- Adults
- Employer Demand for Skills - a) the immediate impact of Covid-19; and b) the future demand for skills
- Young People
- Digital Skills
- The alignment of skills supply with employer demand

This report covers the first of the topics listed above and, amongst other issues, seeks to address the following questions:

- What has Ofsted found to be the strengths and weaknesses of the post-16 offer in Cheshire and Warrington?
- What issues can be identified from an analysis of the National Achievement Rate Tables for Cheshire and Warrington and from an analysis of the ESFA localities data cubes?
- What do travel to learn patterns look like for adults and young people?
- How has the LEP made capital investments in Cheshire and Warrington's skills infrastructure?

The report has 6 sections. The remaining sections are:

- Executive Summary
- Qualification Achievement in Cheshire and Warrington
- Travel to Learn Patterns
- Inspections of Post-16 Education and Training in Cheshire and Warrington
- LEP Skills Capital Investment

2. Executive Summary

There were 40 providers funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and identified in the National Achievement Rate Tables (NARTs) that delivered further education (excluding apprenticeships and Higher Education) in Cheshire and Warrington in 2018/19. The overall achievement rate for Cheshire and Warrington in 2018/19 was 87.8%, 1.8% higher than for delivery across the country which stood at 86%.

In total there are 34 providers recorded in the NARTs as having delivered further education (FE) to adults in Cheshire and Warrington in 2018/19. Achievement rates for adults aged 19+ in FE in 2018/19 were 1.5% higher in Cheshire and Warrington than for national (90.6% compared to 89.1%).

In total there are 12 providers recorded in the NARTs as having delivered FE to young people (16-18) in Cheshire and Warrington in 2018/19. At 86%, Achievement Rates for 16-18 year olds learning in Cheshire and Warrington exceeded the national achievement rate of 82.6% by 3.4%.

In total, 465 providers delivered apprenticeships to residents of Cheshire and Warrington in 2018/19. These providers delivered 6,440 apprenticeship starts in 2018/19 with 3,393 employers. On average (mean), each employer started 1.9 apprentices. The median for apprenticeship starts with an employer was 1. In 2018/19 there were 62 employers with over 10 apprenticeship starts in the year and six of those had over 30 starts. The highest number of starts with a single employer in 2018/19 was 48.

The overall apprenticeship achievement rate for Cheshire and Warrington residents in 2018/19, at 65.1%, was slightly higher than the overall national apprenticeship achievement rate of 64.7%.

In 2018/19, there were a total of 1,354 Cheshire and Warrington residents aged 16-18 enrolled with providers outside of Cheshire and Warrington. 422 of these were Cheshire East Residents, 111 were Cheshire West and Chester residents, and 821 were Warrington residents.

In 2018/19 373 young people resident in Cheshire and Warrington enrolled with providers in Halton; 190 with providers in St Helens; 180, with providers in Wigan; 177 with providers in Stockport; 146 with providers in Wirral; and 122 with providers in Manchester.

In 2018/19, 2,952 16-18 learners resident outside of Cheshire and Warrington were enrolled with Cheshire and Warrington based providers – 1,675 with providers in Cheshire East; 454 with providers in Cheshire West and Chester; and 823 with providers in Warrington.

Halton, Staffordshire, Shropshire and Wirral all had in excess of 200 young people enrolled with Cheshire and Warrington providers in 2018/19.

The devolution of the Adult Education Budget in 2018/19 to the Liverpool City Region and Greater Manchester Combined Authorities is likely to make a significant impact on the volumes of adults from these places learning with Cheshire and Warrington providers. This is because not all Cheshire and Warrington providers will continue to be funded for delivering learning to residents of these areas.

In 2018/19, there were 9,766 Cheshire and Warrington adult (19+) resident learners enrolled with providers based outside of the LEP area. 3,654 were residents of Cheshire East; 3,028 were residents of Cheshire West and Chester; and 3,084 were residents of Warrington.

In 2018/19 over 500 adult residents of Cheshire and Warrington enrolled with providers in each of Manchester, Liverpool, Stockport and St Helens.

There were 14,845 adult residents of other local authorities enrolled with Cheshire and Warrington based providers in 2018/19. 4,499 were enrolled with providers in Cheshire East; 3,914 were enrolled with providers in Cheshire West and Chester; and 6,432 were enrolled with providers in Warrington.

Halton, Wirral, St Helens and Wigan each had in excess of 1,000 adult (19+) learners enrolled with Cheshire and Warrington providers. Funding for adult learning has now been devolved (from 2019/20) in all of these places.

Since 2017, Ofsted has judged 2 Cheshire and Warrington-based providers to be 'Outstanding', 8 to be 'Good' and 3 as 'Requires Improvement'. In addition, 12 new providers have been subject to a monitoring visit by the inspectorate and deemed to be making 'Reasonable Progress'.

In 2019, Cheshire and Warrington LEP decided to invest £5m of Local Growth Fund in the specialist equipment needed to deliver digital and STEM-related training and education. This resulted in 5 small, 2 medium and 6 large projects being supported.

3. Qualification Achievement in Cheshire and Warrington

Each year, the Government publishes data on learner achievement in the Further Education and Apprenticeship sectors. These data can be found online in the National Achievement Rates Tables (NARTs)¹. The most recently published data is for 2018/19 academic year and that is what is considered below.

An achievement rate is expressed as a percentage. It reflects the percentage of learners that have achieved a qualification after starting to study it. The achievement rate is the product of the pass rate (the percentage of completers that achieve a qualification) and the retention rate (the percentage of those that start a programme of study completing it).

The National Achievement Rate Tables (NARTs) publish a range of data for overall achievement and timely achievement. Timely achievement is a measure of the percentage of learners that achieve a qualification by a specified time. In this section, only overall achievement rates are considered.

This section will consider headline Achievement Rates for providers operating in Cheshire and Warrington for both FE and apprenticeships. It will then discuss provider Achievement Rates in FE and apprenticeships for each Tier 1 Sector Subject Area.

3.1 Overview

3.1.1 Overview of Further Education Delivery in Cheshire and Warrington

There were 40 providers funded by the ESFA that delivered further education (excluding apprenticeships and Higher Education) in Cheshire and Warrington the 2018/19 academic year. The overall achievement rate for Cheshire and Warrington in 2018/19 was 87.8%, 1.8% higher than for delivery across the country which stood at 86%.

The table below sets out the achievement rate data for the 21 providers that delivered to a cohort greater than 100 in Cheshire and Warrington. It can be seen from this that five providers had achievement rates below the national figure of 86%. These were Cheshire College South and West (85.7%), Total People Ltd (71.4%), Interserve (71.6%), Morthyng Group (80%), Learning Curve Group (81.2%), and CVQO Ltd. (47.9%).

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-achievement-rates-tables-2018-to-2019>

Qualification Achievement Rates of FE in Cheshire and Warrington 2018/19, All Age				
Institution Name	Overall Cohort	Overall Achievement Rate %	Pass Rate %	Retention Rate %
Cheshire College South and West	11550	85.7	90.8	94.4
Warrington & Vale Royal College	6470	88.5	96.8	91.5
Reaseheath College	6180	87.1	93.3	93.3
Priestley College	5290	86.6	93.4	92.7
Sir John Deane's College	3040	91	99.6	91.4
Macclesfield College	2350	90.3	94.4	95.6
Cheshire West and Chester Council	2270	99.6	100	99.6
Total People Limited	1190	71.4	96.8	73.8
Cheshire East Council	800	94.3	96.7	97.5
Mantra Learning Limited	600	87	99.8	87.2
Herefordshire, Ludlow, and North Shropshire College	340	100	100	100
Release Potential Ltd	300	99.7	100	99.7
Interserve Learning & Employment (Services) Limited	240	71.6	100	71.6
GP Strategies Training Limited	220	92.8	100	92.8
North Hertfordshire College	200	99.5	99.5	100
Peopleplus Group Limited	180	97.8	99.4	98.3
Remit Group Limited	140	98.6	100	98.6
Access to Music Limited	130	95.3	95.3	100
Morthyng Group Limited	130	80	98	81.6
Learning Curve Group Limited	120	81.2	94.1	86.3
CVQO Ltd	100	47.9	67.6	70.8
Cheshire & Warrington (All Age, All Providers)	43,420	87.8	94.6	92.8
National (All Age, All Providers)	3,127,890	86.0	93.9	91.6
<i>Source: Further Education and Skills National Achievement Rate Tables 2018/19</i>				

Achievement Rates for providers that deliver to adults (sometimes using sub-contractors) in Cheshire and Warrington are provided below. Achievement rates for adults aged 19+ in FE in 2018/19 were 1.5% higher in Cheshire and Warrington than for national (90.6% compared to 89.1%).

Provider-level data is only presented for the 13 providers that delivered to a cohort of more than 200 in Cheshire and Warrington in 2018/19. In total there are 34 providers recorded as having delivered learning to adults in 2018/19.

There were five of these 13 providers whose overall 19+ FE Achievement Rate was below the 2018/19 national rate of 89.1%. They are Cheshire College South and West (88.2%), Mantra Learning (87%), Reaseheath College (79.6%), Total People (77.5%), and Interserve (71.6%). Five of the 13 providers had a retention rate lower than the national retention rate of 93.7% and two of the providers had a pass rate lower than the national pass rate of 93.7%.

Qualification Achievement Rates of Adult (19+) Further Education in Cheshire and Warrington 2018/19

Institution Name	Overall Cohort	Overall Achievement Rate %	Pass Rate %	Retention Rate %
Cheshire College South and West	4750	88.2	92	95.8
Warrington & Vale Royal College	3620	90.1	97.4	92.5
Cheshire West and Chester Council	2270	99.6	100	99.6
Macclesfield College	860	90.6	95.9	94.4
Cheshire East Council	800	94.3	96.7	97.5
Mantra Learning Limited	600	87	99.8	87.2
Reaseheath College	540	79.6	88.7	89.8
Herefordshire, Ludlow, and North Shropshire College	340	100	100	100
Release Potential Ltd	300	99.7	100	99.7
Total People Limited	290	77.5	97	79.9
Interserve Learning & Employment (Services) Limited	240	71.6	100	71.6
GP Strategies Training Limited	210	97.6	100	97.6
North Hertfordshire College	200	99.5	99.5	100
Cheshire and Warrington (All FE providers 19+)	17,040	90.6	96.2	94.1
National (All FE providers 19+)	1,621,290	89.1	95.1	93.7

Source: Further Education and Skills National Achievement Rate Tables 2018/19

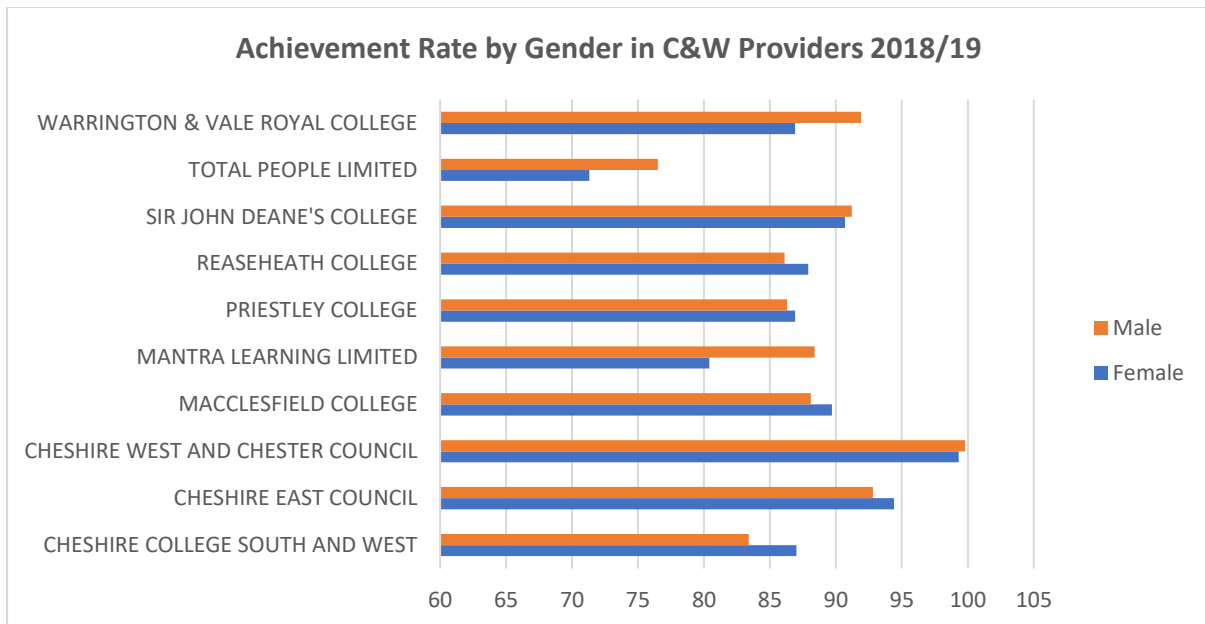
Achievement Rates for providers that deliver to young people (sometimes using sub-contractors) in Cheshire and Warrington are provided below. Data is presented for all the providers that delivered to young people aged 16-18 in Cheshire and Warrington in 2018/19. At 86%, Achievement Rates for 16-18 year olds learning in Cheshire and Warrington exceeded the national achievement rate of 82.6% by 3.4%.

There were five providers that delivered an Achievement Rate for 16-18 year olds below the national average of 82.6%. They were: Total People Limited (69.4%), Morthyng Group Limited (80%), CVQO Ltd (47.9%), TTE Training Limited (82%), and Worcestershire County Council (77%). It is not clear why Worcestershire County Council would want to sub-contract for delivery in Cheshire and Warrington.

Qualification Achievement Rates of 16-18 Further Education in Cheshire and Warrington 2018/19				
Institution Name	Overall Cohort	Overall Achievement Rate %	Pass Rate %	Retention Rate %
Cheshire College South and West	6800	84	90	93.4
Reaseheath College	5640	87.8	93.7	93.7
Priestley College	5160	86.9	93.3	93.1
Sir John Deane's College	3040	91	99.6	91.4
Warrington & Vale Royal College	2850	86.4	95.9	90.1
Macclesfield College	1490	90.1	93.6	96.2
Total People Limited	900	69.4	96.7	71.8
Morthyng Group Limited	130	80	98	81.6
CVQO Ltd	100	47.9	67.6	70.8
TTE Training Limited	90	82	88	93.3
Worcestershire County Council	70	77	87.7	87.8
Loughborough College	40	88.1	94.9	92.9
Cheshire and Warrington (All FE Providers 16-18)	26,390	86.0	93.5	92.0
National (All FE providers 16-18)	1,506,600	82.6	92.5	89.3
<i>Source: Further Education and Skills National Achievement Rate Tables 2018/19</i>				

The chart below illustrates the achievement rate by gender and provider in 2018/19. The providers selected are those that taught a cohort (all ages) of 600 or more in Cheshire and Warrington in 2018/19. The data, however, relates to each provider's delivery in and out of the LEP area. So, for example, Mantra Learning Ltd teach substantial numbers of learners in Greater Manchester and these are counted in the data below.

For most providers, the differences between achievement rates for males and females are 5 percentage points or less. This is not the case for Total People Ltd (Male 76.5%, Female 71.3%) or Mantra Learning (88.4% Male, 80.4% Female).



3.1.2 Overview of Apprenticeships in Cheshire and Warrington

In total, 465 providers delivered apprenticeships to residents of Cheshire and Warrington in 2018/19. These providers delivered 6,440 apprenticeship starts in 2018/19 with 3,393 employers. On average (mean), each employer started 1.9 apprentices; although the median for apprenticeship starts with an employer was 1. In 2018/19 there were 62 employers with over 10 apprenticeship starts in the year and six of those had over 30 starts. The highest number of starts with a single employer in 2018/19 was 48.

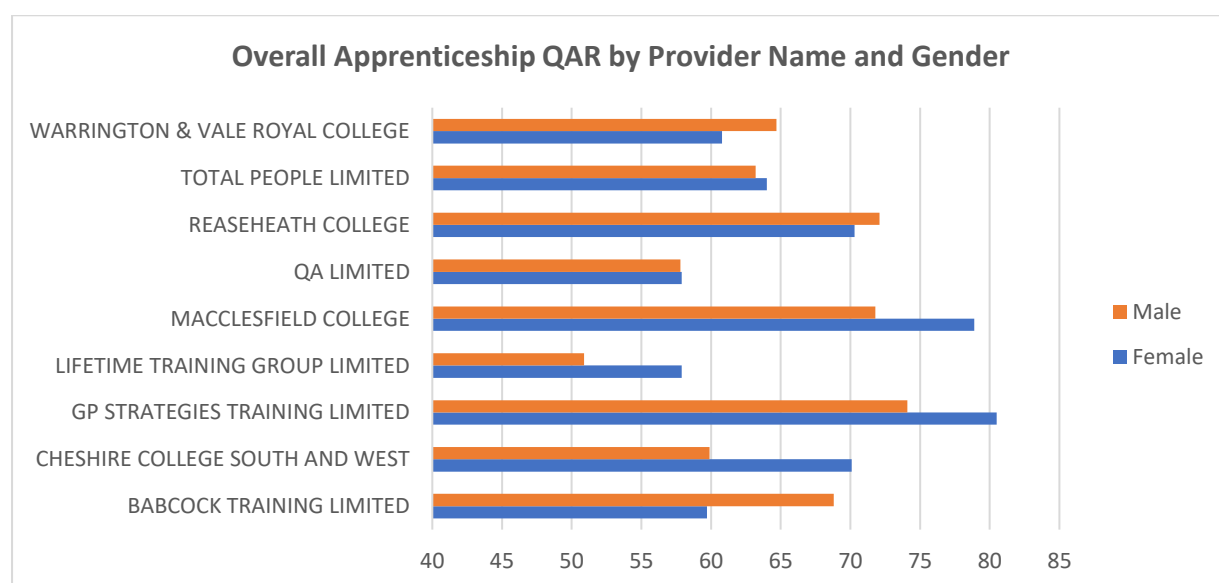
The table below presents national and Cheshire and Warrington data that shows that the overall achievement rate for Cheshire and Warrington residents, at 65.1% was slightly higher than the overall national rate of 64.7%.

The table below also presents data for the providers that had 100 or more apprenticeships starts by residents of Cheshire and Warrington in 2018/19. These 9 providers were responsible for 37% of all starts in Cheshire and Warrington in 2018/19. The three General Further Education Colleges and the Specialist Further Education College are joined by five Independent Training Providers on the list. Four of the nine providers had an overall apprenticeship success rate above the national overall rate of 64.7%, and five of these providers had an overall rate below the national rate. Lifetime Training Group, which delivered 402 resident starts in 2018/19 had the lowest achievement rate at 55.3%. GP Strategies Training Ltd had 136 starts and the highest achievement rate of these providers, at 79.3%.

Providers with >100 C&W Resident Starts on an Apprenticeship in 2018/19, All Age					
	Starts	Overall Achievement	16-18 Achievement	19-23 Achievement	24+ Achievement
Total People Limited	622	63.6	61.1	65.8	64
Lifetime Training Group Limited	402	55.3	55.6	53	56.3
Cheshire College South and West	304	66.4	68.4	65.2	65.7
Warrington & Vale Royal College	279	63	52.3	76.3	61.6
Macclesfield College	202	75.4	75	74.4	76.7
Babcock Training Limited	177	63.8	69.8	71.1	56.7
GP Strategies Training Limited	136	79.3	80.7	78.8	79.1
QA Limited	124	57.8	64.5	63.5	42.3
Reaseheath College	106	71.8	74.2	75.6	n/a
Cheshire & Warrington		65.1	n/a	n/a	n/a
All Institutions (national)		64.7	68.2	67.7	60.4

Source: ESFA Localities datacube (residency), NARTS 2018/19

The overall achievement rate in 2018/19 by gender for these providers is illustrated in the chart below. There are 5 providers where the achievement rate for females is more than 5 percentage points higher than the achievement rate for males. They are: Macclesfield College (male 71.8%, female 78.9%); Lifetime Training Group (male 50.9%, female 57.9%); GP Strategies (male 74.1%, 80.5%); Cheshire College South and West (male 59.9%, female 70.1%). One of these providers, Babcock Training, has an overall achievement rate for males which is more than 5 percentage points than that for females (male 68.8%, female 59.7%).



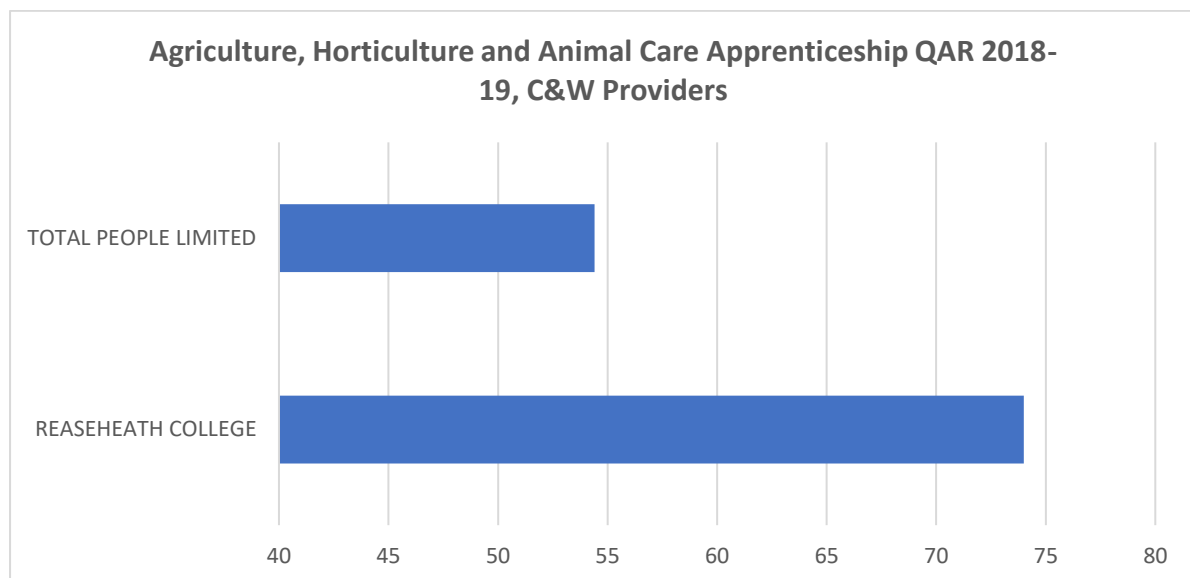
3.2 Sector Subject Area Qualification Achievement Rates

Set out below is analysis of provider achievement rates in FE and Apprenticeships. The rates quoted are for the totality of a provider's delivery in the Sector Subject Area rather than only for delivery in Cheshire and Warrington. The providers in scope for this analysis are - a) those providers that delivered 600 or more starts in FE in 2018/19; and, b) those providers that delivered 100 or more apprenticeship starts in Cheshire and Warrington in 2018/19.

3.2.1 Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care

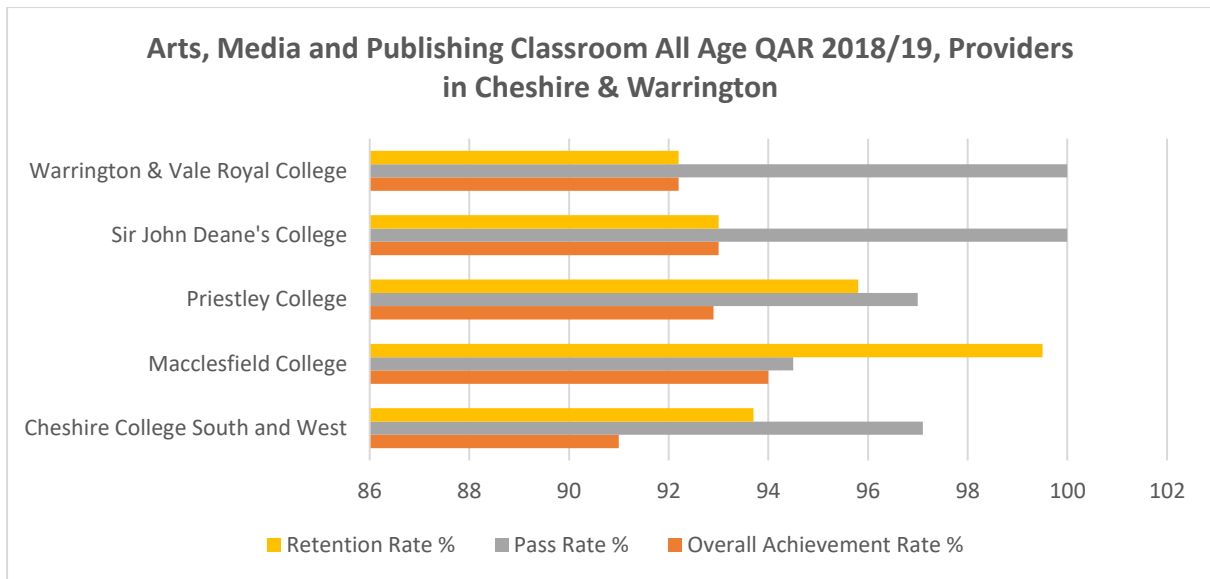
Reaseheath College was the only significant provider of classroom-based FE in the Sector Subject Area of 'Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care'. In 2018/19 the college delivered to a cohort of 3,520 with an achievement rate of 88.5% (pass rate 94.6%, retention rate 93.5%).

Two of the providers that delivered 100 or more apprenticeship starts in 2018/19 in Cheshire and Warrington delivered apprenticeships in the Sector Subject Area of 'Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care'. As can be seen from the chart below, Reaseheath College had an overall achievement rate of 74% and Total People had an overall achievement rate of 54.4%.



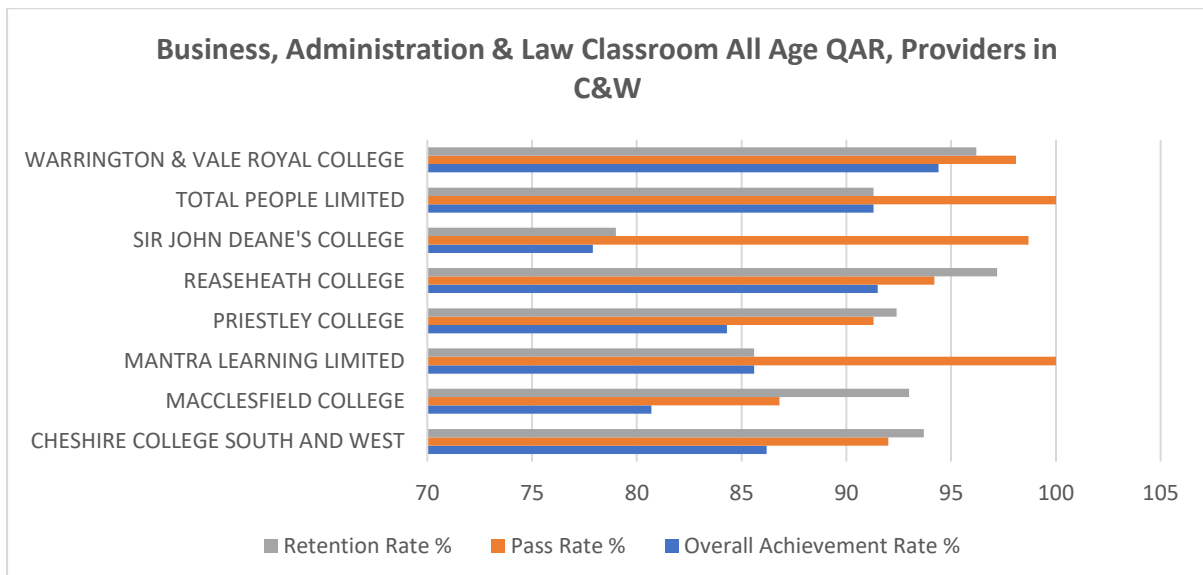
3.2.2 Arts, Media and Publishing

The chart below sets out the data for the achievement rate of learning aims delivered in a classroom setting in the Sector Subject Area of 'Arts, Media and Publishing' by the main FE providers in Cheshire and Warrington. The achievement rate exceeds 90% in all the providers identified, being in the range 91%-94%. The cohort size for the providers identified ranges from 200 in Macclesfield College to 930 in Priestley College.

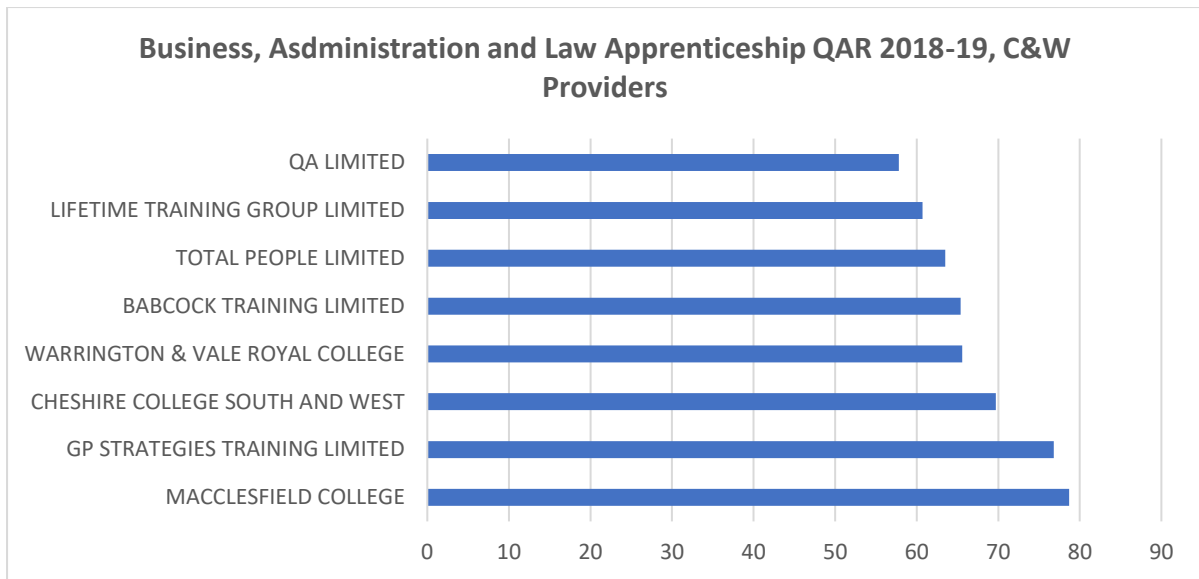


3.2.3 Business, Administration and Law

The chart below sets out the data for the achievement rate of learning aims delivered in a classroom setting in the Sector Subject Area of 'Business, Administration and Law' by the main FE providers in Cheshire and Warrington. The achievement rate is in the range of 94.4% (Warrington & Vale Royal College) to 77.9% (Sir John Deane's College). The cohort size for the providers identified ranges from 50 in Total People to 1,460 in Warrington & Vale Royal College.

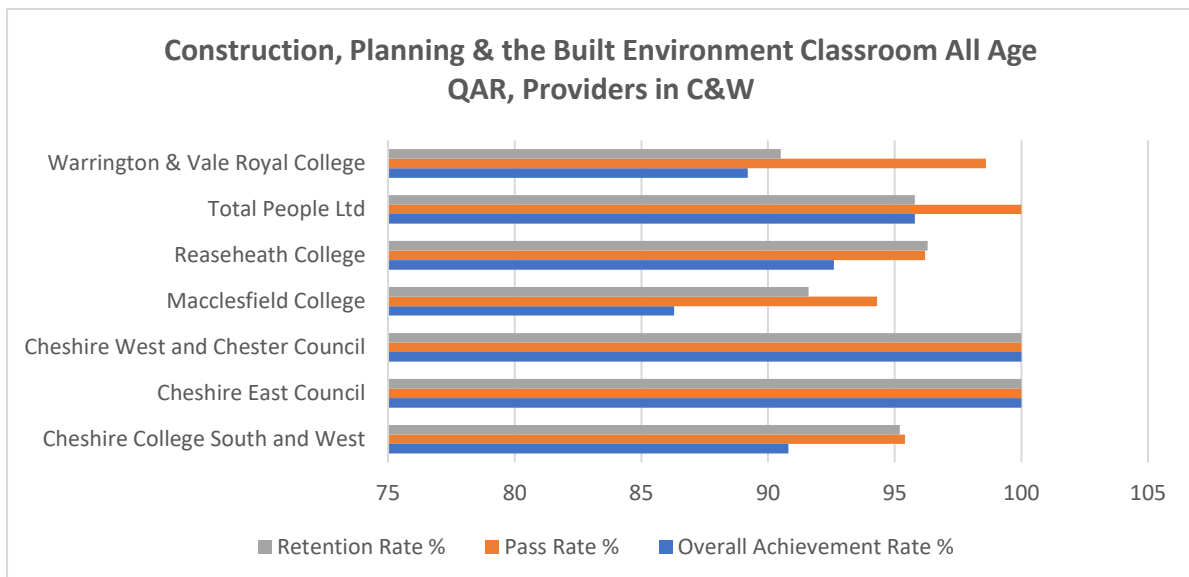


Eight of the providers that delivered 100 or more apprenticeship starts in 2018/19 with Cheshire and Warrington residents delivered apprenticeships in the Sector Subject Area of 'Business, Administration and Law'. As can be seen from the chart below, overall apprenticeship achievement rates were in the range of 57.8% (QA Ltd) to 78.7% (Macclesfield College).

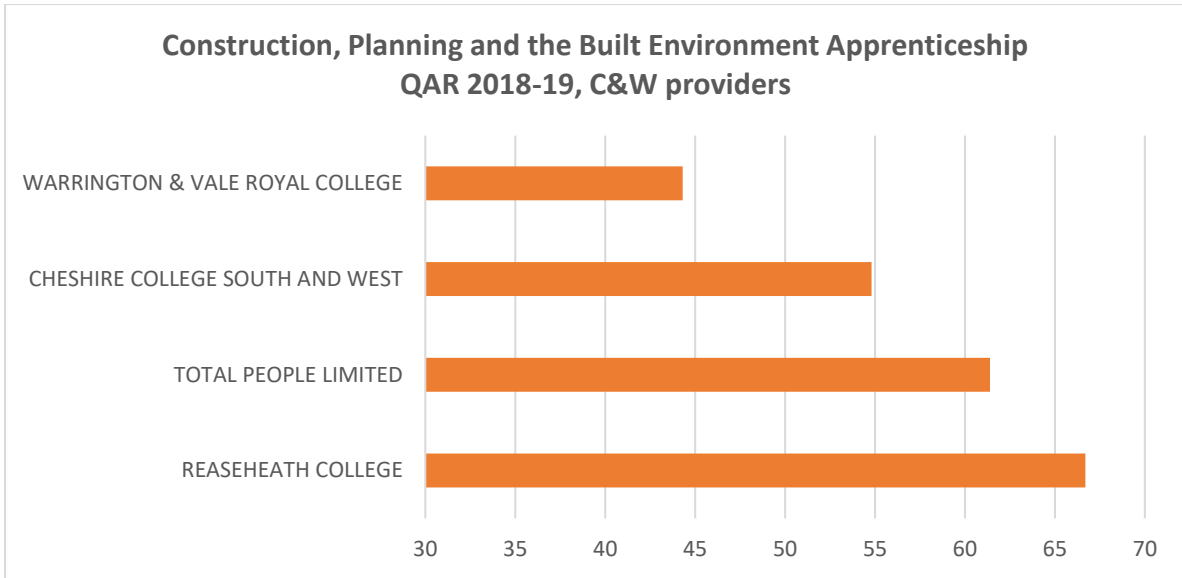


3.2.4 Construction, Planning and The Built Environment

The chart below sets out the data for the achievement rate of learning aims delivered in a classroom setting in the Sector Subject Area of 'Construction, Planning and The Built Environment' by the main FE providers in Cheshire and Warrington. The achievement rate is in the range of 100% (Cheshire East Council and Cheshire West and Chester Council) to 86.3% (Macclesfield College). The cohort size for the providers identified ranges from 60 in Cheshire East Council to 500 in Cheshire College South and West.

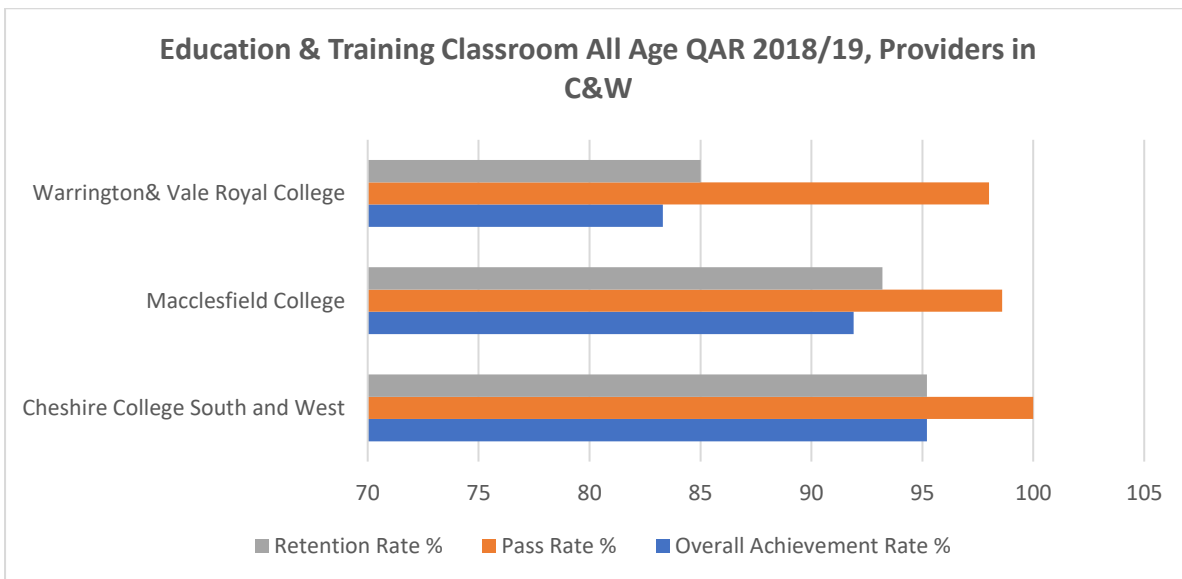


Four of the providers that delivered 100 or more apprenticeship starts in 2018/19 with Cheshire and Warrington residents delivered apprenticeships in the Sector Subject Area of 'Construction, Planning and the Built Environment'. As can be seen from the chart below, overall apprenticeship achievement rates were in the range of 44.3% (Warrington & Vale Royal College) to 66.7% (Reaseheath College).

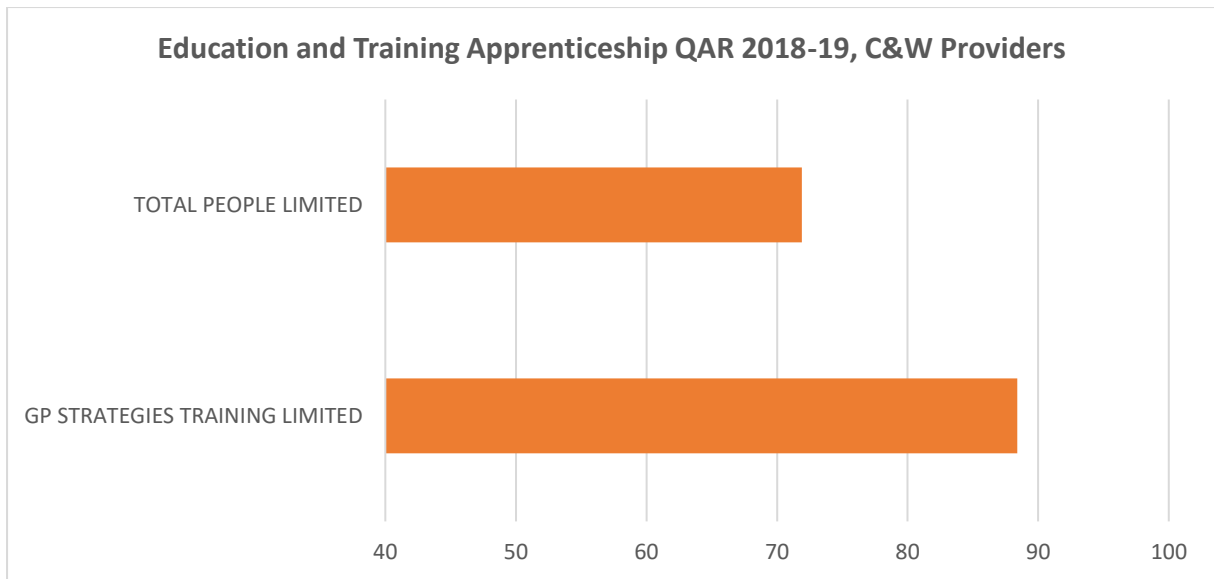


3.2.5 Education and Training

The chart below sets out the data for the achievement rate of learning aims delivered in a classroom setting in the Sector Subject Area of 'Education and Training' by the main FE providers in Cheshire and Warrington. The achievement rate is in the range of 95.2% (Cheshire College South and West) to 83.3% (Warrington & Vale Royal College). The cohort size for the providers identified ranges from 60 in Warrington & Vale Royal College to 110 in Cheshire College South and West.

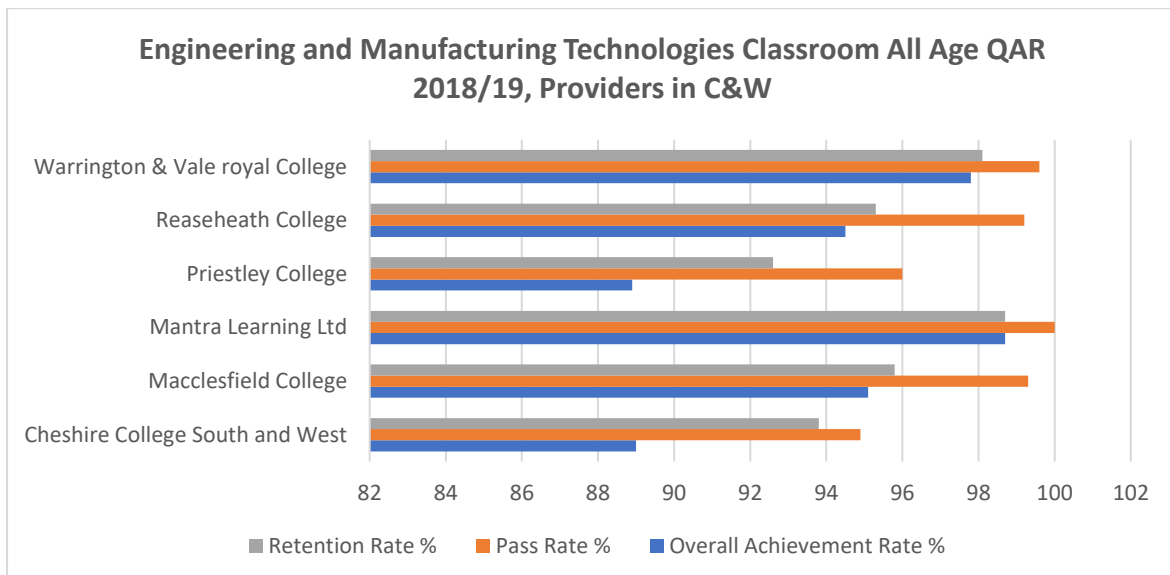


Two of the providers that delivered 100 or more apprenticeship starts in 2018/19 with Cheshire and Warrington residents delivered apprenticeships in the Sector Subject Area of 'Education and Training'. As can be seen from the chart below, overall apprenticeship achievement rates were 71.9% with Total People and 88.4% with GP Strategies Training Ltd.

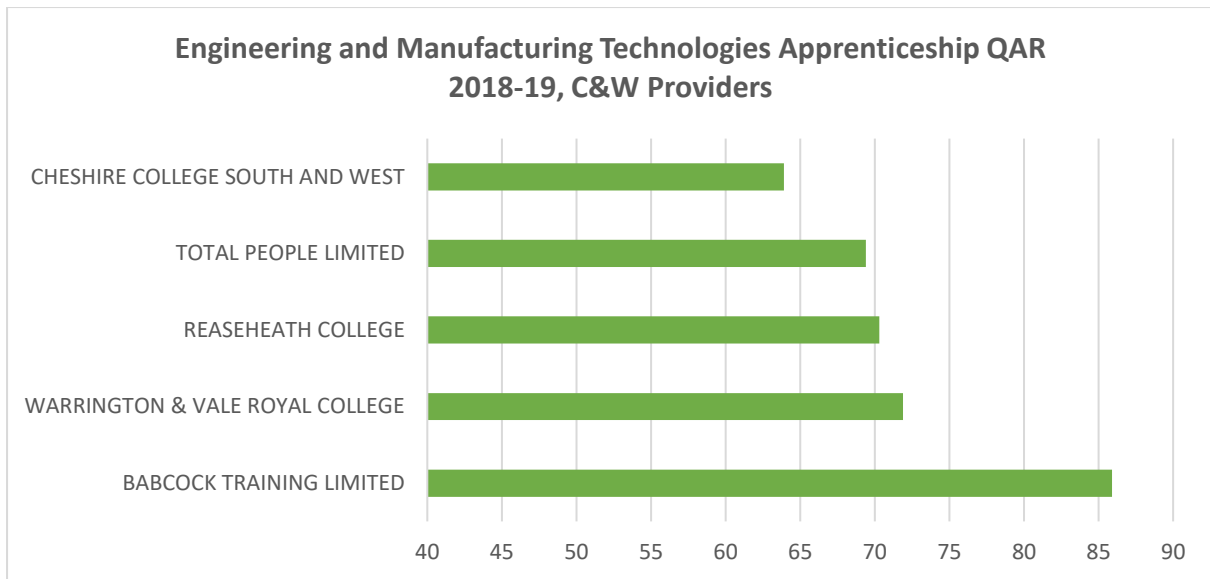


3.2.6 Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies

The chart below sets out the data for the achievement rate of learning aims delivered in a classroom setting in the Sector Subject Area of ‘Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies’ by the main FE providers in Cheshire and Warrington. The achievement rate is in the range of 98.7% (Mantra Learning) to 88.9% (Priestley College). The cohort size for the providers identified ranges from 140 in Macclesfield College to 640 in Cheshire College South and West.

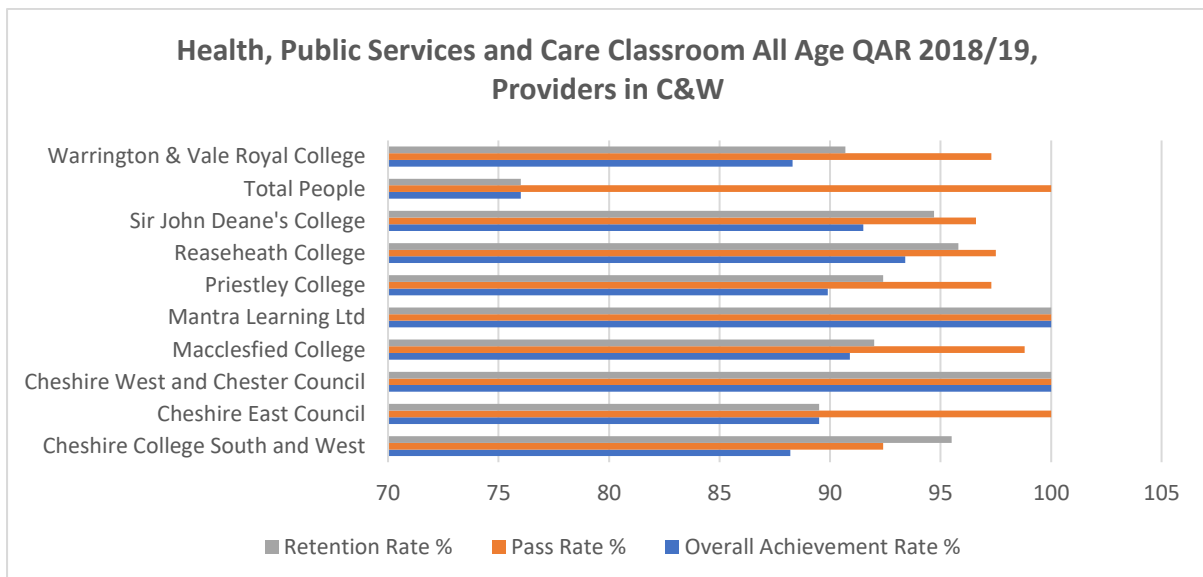


Five of the providers that delivered 100 or more apprenticeship starts in 2018/19 with Cheshire and Warrington residents delivered apprenticeships in the Sector Subject Area of ‘Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies’. As can be seen from the chart below, overall apprenticeship achievement rates were in the range of 63.9% (Cheshire College South and West) to 85.9% (Babcock Training Ltd).

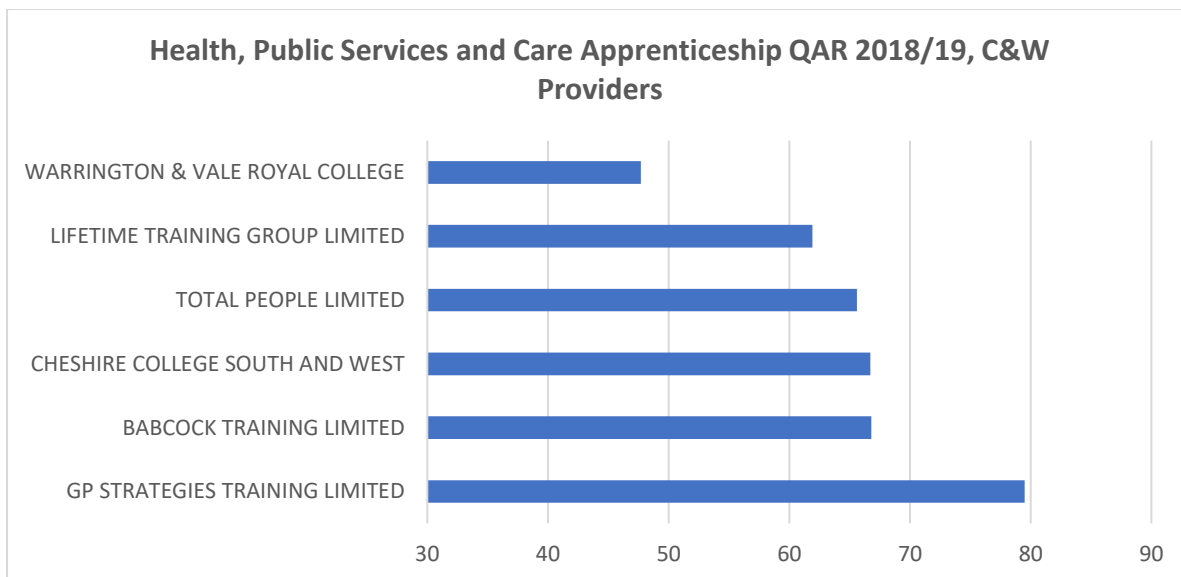


3.2.7 Health, Public Services and Care

The chart below sets out the data for the achievement rate of learning aims delivered in a classroom setting in the Sector Subject Area of 'Health, Public Services and Care' by the main FE providers in Cheshire and Warrington. The achievement rate is in the range of 100% (Mantra Learning) to 76% (Total People). The cohort size for the providers identified ranges from 40 in Mantra Learning and Cheshire East Council to 1,020 in Warrington & Vale Royal College and 1,310 in Cheshire College South and West.

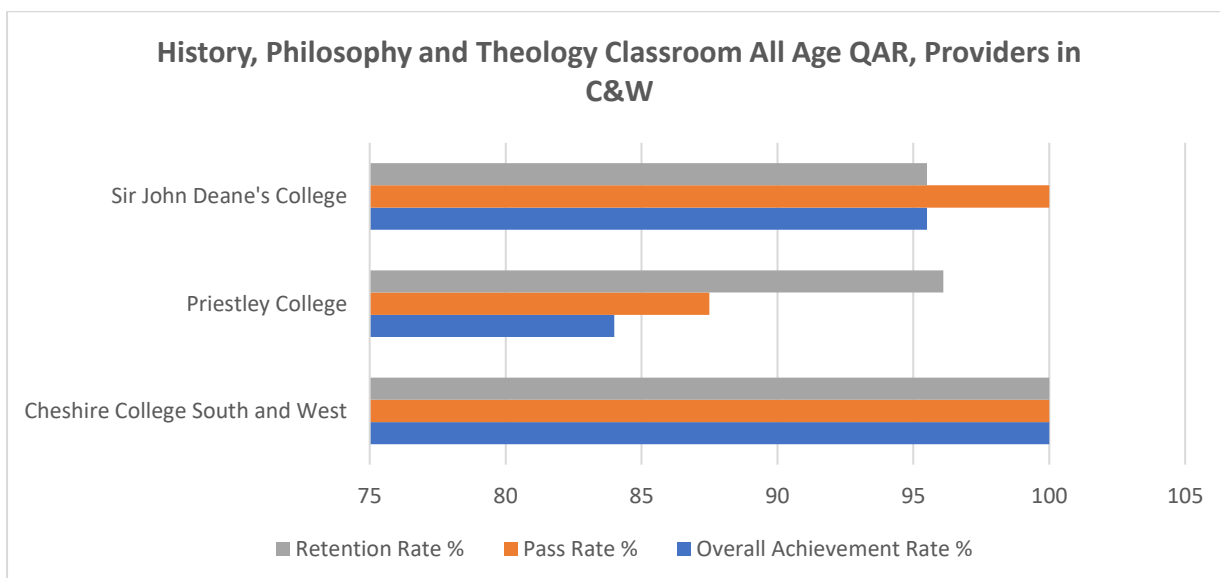


Six of the providers that delivered 100 or more apprenticeship starts in 2018/19 with Cheshire and Warrington residents delivered apprenticeships in the Sector Subject Area of 'Health, Public Services and Care'. As can be seen from the chart below, overall apprenticeship achievement rates were in the range of 47.7% (Warrington & Vale Royal College) to 79.5% (GP Strategies Training Ltd).



3.2.8 History, Philosophy and Theology

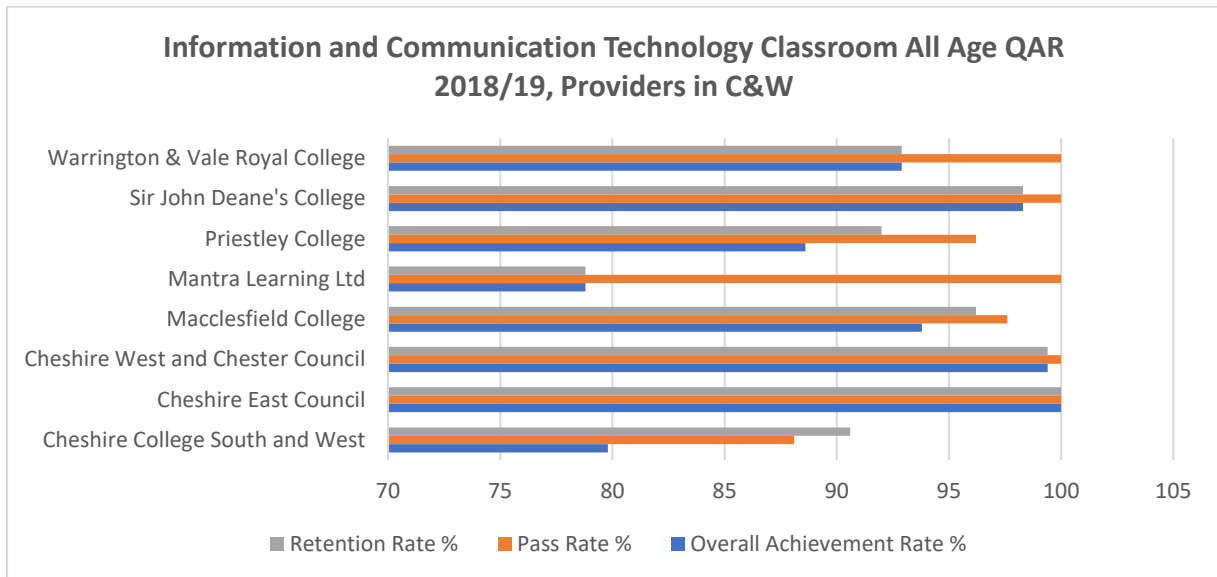
The chart below sets out the data for the achievement rate of learning aims delivered in a classroom setting in the Sector Subject Area of 'History, Philosophy and Theology' by the main FE providers in Cheshire and Warrington. The achievement rate is in the range of 100% (Cheshire College South and West) to 84% (Priestley College). The cohort size for the providers identified ranges from 50 in Cheshire College South and West to 280 in Priestley College.



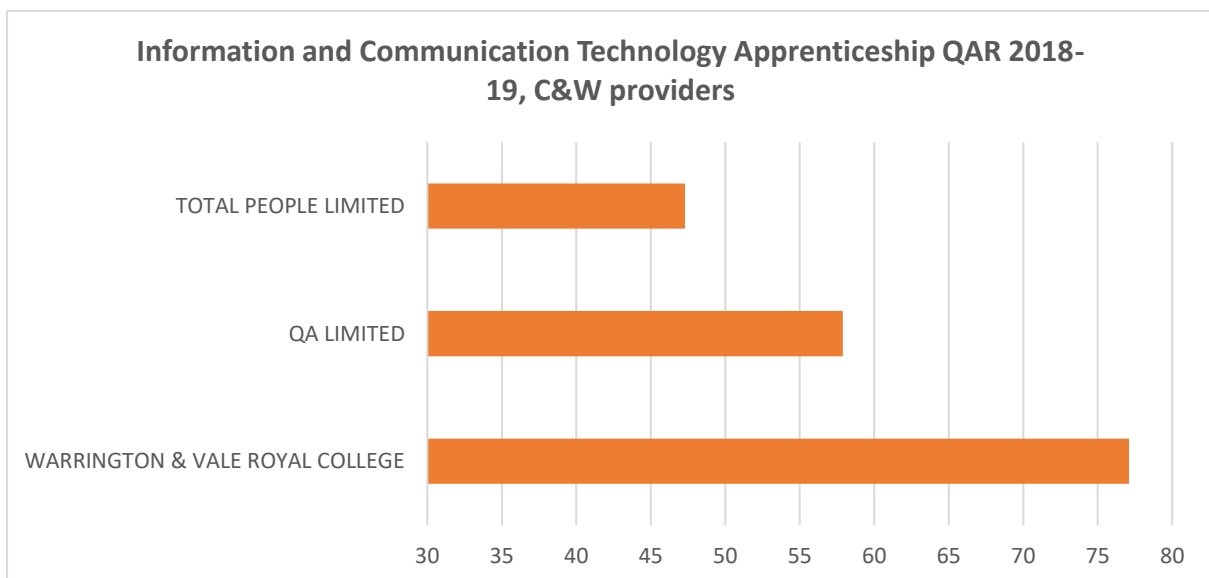
3.2.9 Information and Communication Technology

The chart below sets out the data for the achievement rate of learning aims delivered in a classroom setting in the Sector Subject Area of 'Information and Communication Technology' by the main FE providers in Cheshire and Warrington. The achievement rate is in the range of 100% (Cheshire East

Council) to 78.8% (Mantra Learning). The cohort size for the providers identified ranges from 90 in Mantra Learning Ltd to 490 in Cheshire West and Chester Council.

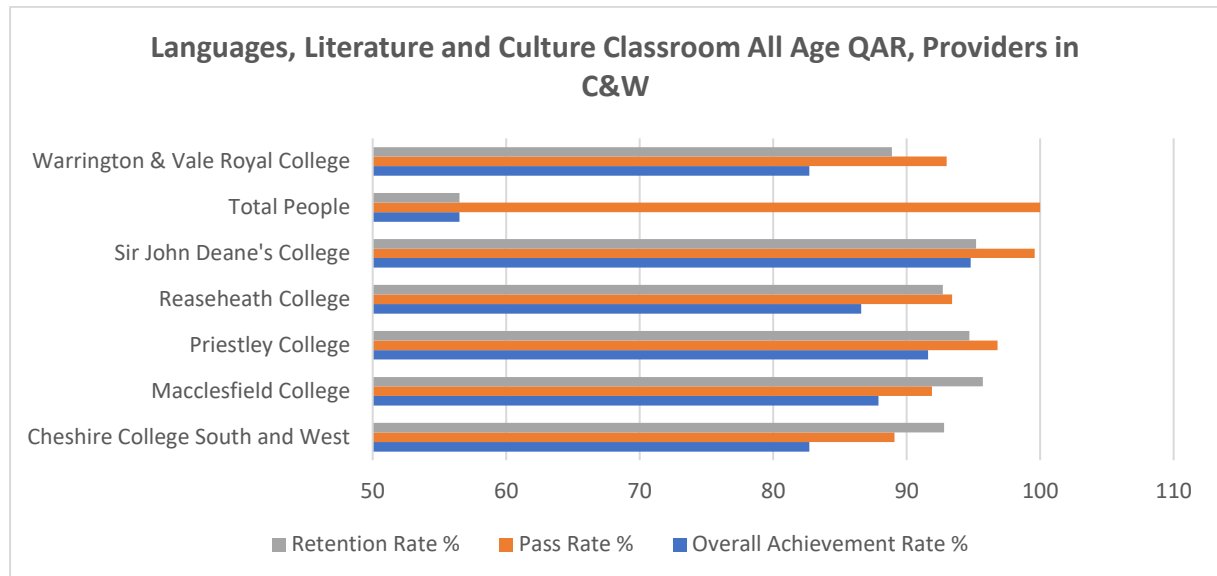


Three of the providers that delivered 100 or more apprenticeship starts in 2018/19 with Cheshire and Warrington residents delivered apprenticeships in the Sector Subject Area of 'Information and Communication Technology'. As can be seen from the chart below, overall apprenticeship achievement rates were in the range of 47.3% (Total People Ltd) to 77.1% (Warrington & Vale Royal College).



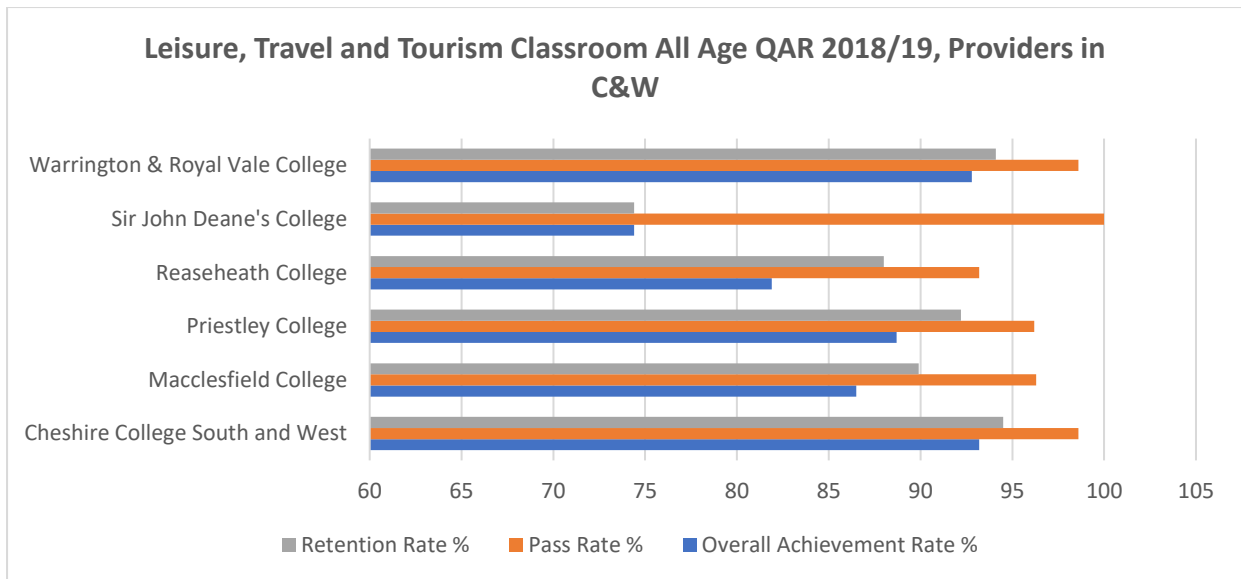
3.2.10 Languages, Literature and Culture

The chart below sets out the data for the achievement rate of learning aims delivered in a classroom setting in the Sector Subject Area of 'Languages, Literature and Culture' by the main FE providers in Cheshire and Warrington. The achievement rate is in the range of 94.8% (Sir John Deane's College) to 56.5% (Total People). The cohort size for the providers identified ranges from 50 in Total People to 1,450 in Cheshire College South and West.

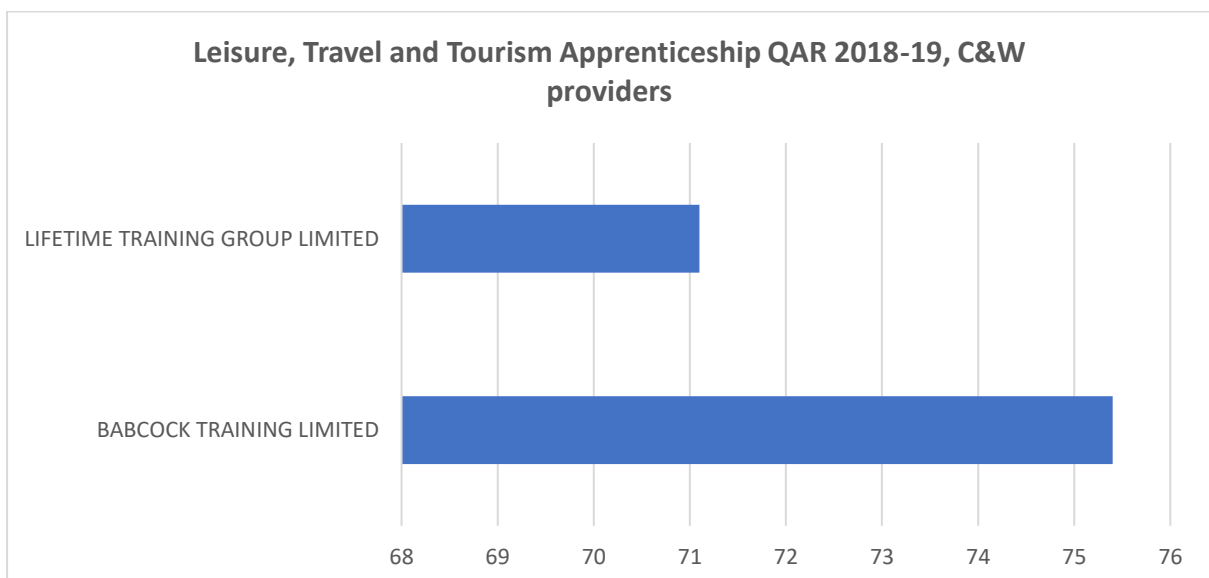


3.2.11 Leisure, Travel and Tourism

The chart below sets out the data for the achievement rate of learning aims delivered in a classroom setting in the Sector Subject Area of 'Leisure, Travel and Tourism' by the main FE providers in Cheshire and Warrington. The achievement rate is in the range of 93.2% (Cheshire College South and West) to 74.4% (Sir John Deane's College). The cohort size for the providers identified ranges from 160 in Sir John Deane's College to 760 in Warrington & Vale Royal College.

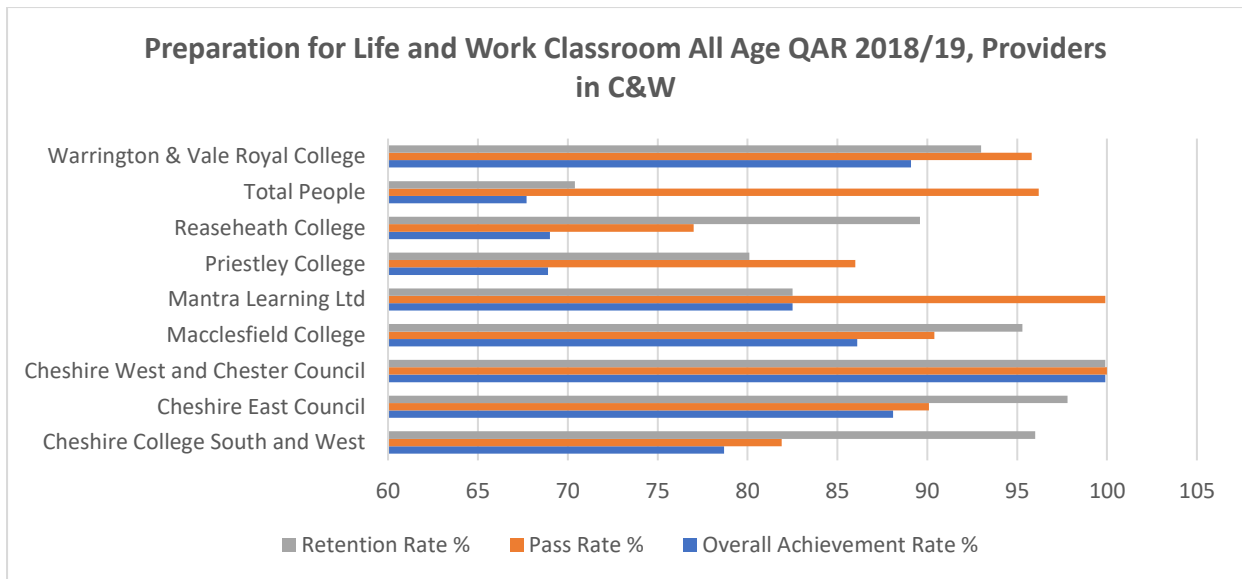


Two of the providers that delivered 100 or more apprenticeship starts in 2018/19 with Cheshire and Warrington residents delivered apprenticeships in the Sector Subject Area of 'Leisure, Travel and Tourism'. As can be seen from the chart below, overall apprenticeship achievement rates were 71.1% with Lifetime Training Group Ltd and 75.4% with Babcock Training Ltd.



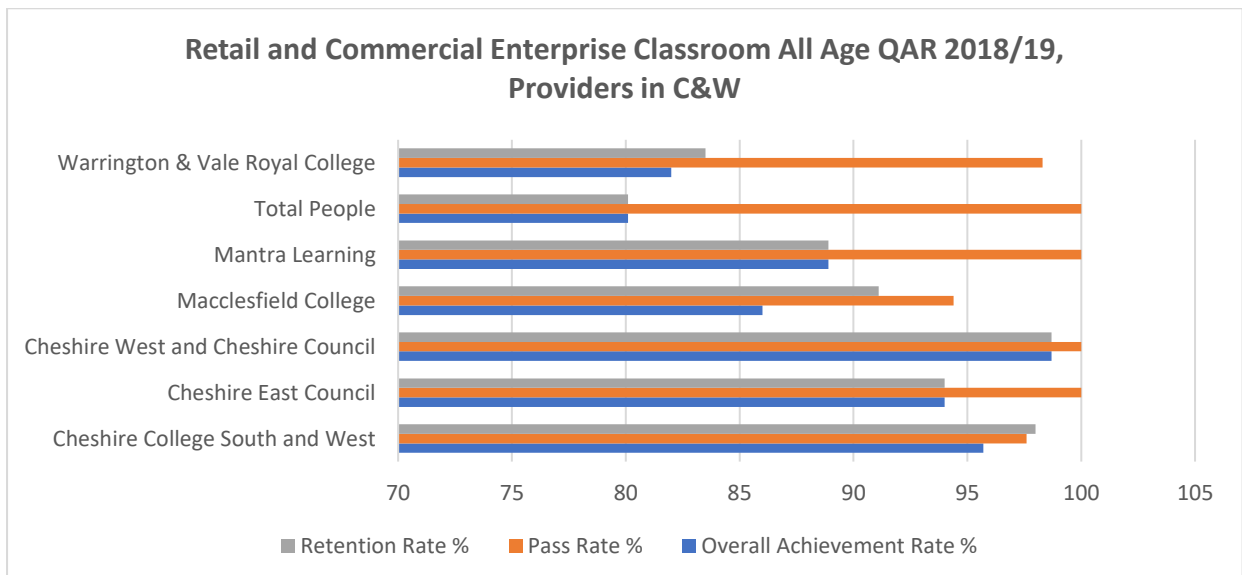
3.2.12 Preparation for Life and Work

The chart below sets out the data for the achievement rate of learning aims delivered in a classroom setting in the Sector Subject Area of 'Preparation for Life and Work' by the main FE providers in Cheshire and Warrington. The achievement rate is in the range of 100% (Cheshire West and Chester Council) to 67.7% (Total People). The cohort size for the providers identified ranges from 270 in Cheshire East Council to 2,790 in Cheshire College South and West.

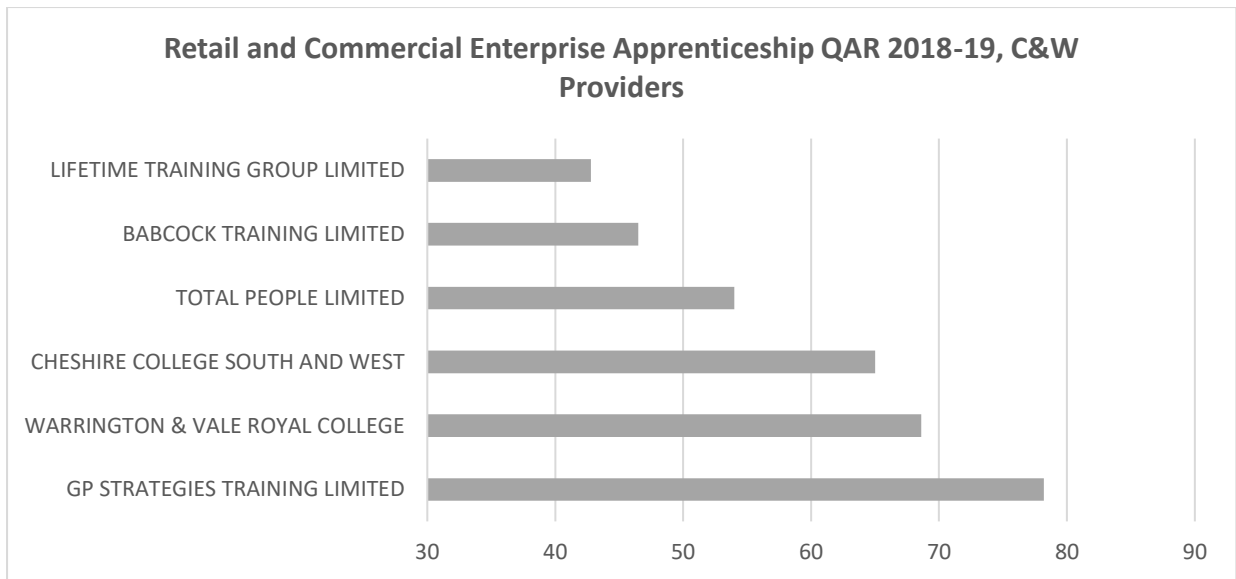


3.2.13 Retail and Commercial Enterprise

The chart below sets out the data for the achievement rate of learning aims delivered in a classroom setting in the Sector Subject Area of 'Retail and Commercial Enterprise' by the main FE providers in Cheshire and Warrington. The achievement rate is in the range of 98.7% (Cheshire West and Chester Council) to 80.1% (Total People). The cohort size for the providers identified ranges from 150 in Total People to 3,920 in Mantra Learning.

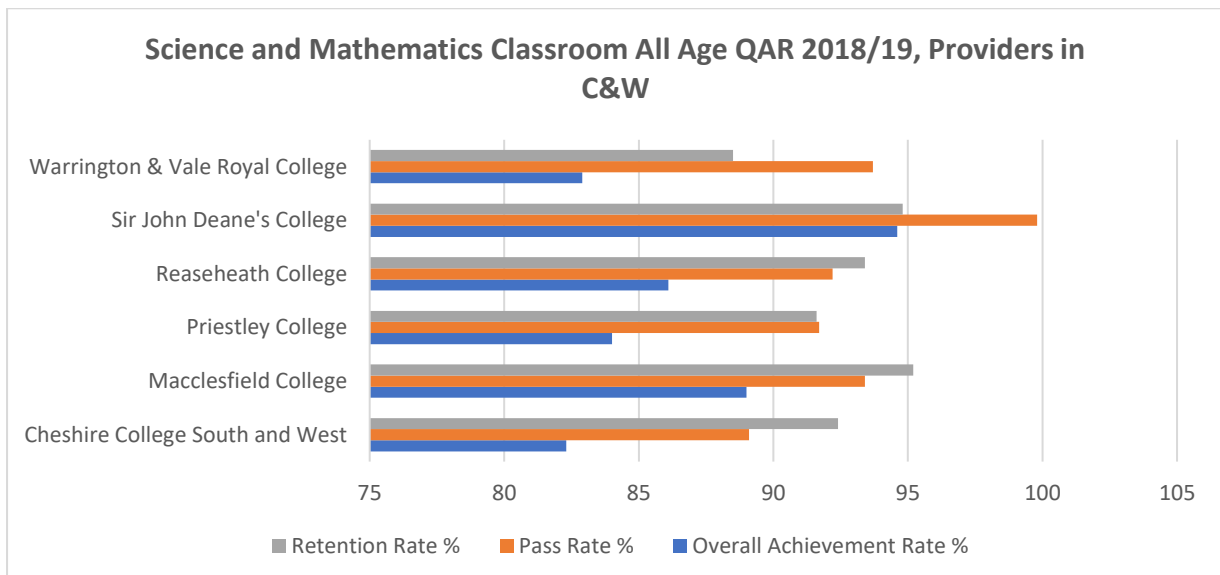


Six of the providers that delivered 100 or more apprenticeship starts in 2018/19 with Cheshire and Warrington residents delivered apprenticeships in the Sector Subject Area of 'Retail and Commercial Enterprise'. As can be seen from the chart below, overall apprenticeship achievement rates were in the range of 42.8% (Lifetime Training Group Ltd) to 78.2% (GP Strategies Training Ltd).



3.2.14 Science and Mathematics

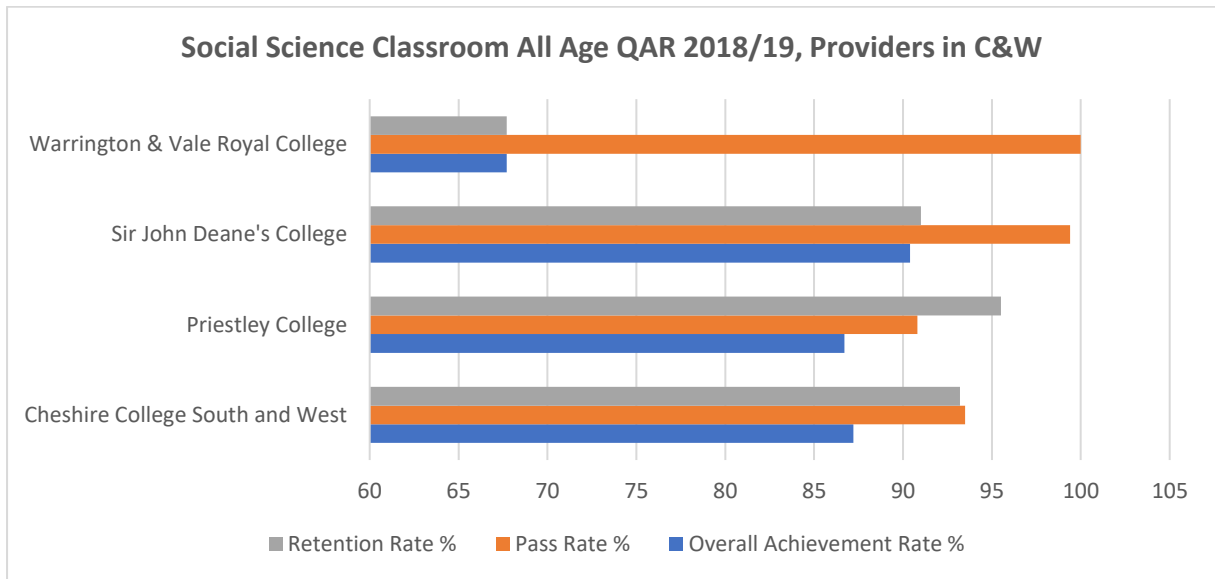
The chart below sets out the data for the achievement rate of learning aims delivered in a classroom setting in the Sector Subject Area of 'Science and Mathematics' by the main FE providers in Cheshire and Warrington. The achievement rate is in the range of 94.6% (Sir John Deane's College) to 82.3% (Cheshire College South and West). The cohort size for the providers identified ranges from 340 in Macclesfield College to 1,770 in Cheshire College South and West.



3.2.15 Social Science

The chart below sets out the data for the achievement rate of learning aims delivered in a classroom setting in the Sector Subject Area of 'Social Science' by the main FE providers in Cheshire and Warrington. The achievement rate is in the range of 90.4% (Sir John Deane's College) to 67.7% (Cheshire College South and West).

(Warrington & Vale Royal College). The cohort size for the providers identified ranges from 30 in Warrington & Vale Royal College to 470 in Priestley College.



4. Travel to Learn Patterns

The ESFA provides LEPs with data on the learning undertaken by residents of their area (ESFA Localities data cube – residency) and data on the learning delivered by providers based in the LEP (ESFA Localities data cube – delivery). These two data sources can be used to provide an insight into probable travel to learn patterns.

The data should be treated with some caution because it can be skewed by several factors, most notably by subcontracting arrangements. For example, a LEP based provider might choose to subcontract with a provider 100s of miles away to deliver some adult provision. The data would show learners being enrolled with the LEP based provider but being resident 100s of miles away. In reality, these learners will not be travelling to the LEP area for their learning, although a review of the data might lead to that conclusion. This sub-contracting issue tends to be more prevalent in provision for adults (19+) than for young people (16-18).

Only data for FE has been considered. Data on apprenticeships and travel to learn has not been considered below because this data is not regarded as reliable by the report author. For example, there is no way of establishing from the data whether the apprenticeship provider has recorded the place of delivery as being the place of the learner’s work, the HQ address of the provider, or the location of off-the-job training; and it has been known for all three of these location types to have been recorded in the same delivery field on the ILR.

4.1 Patterns of Young People’s Learning

The table below presents the data for young people aged 16-18 resident in Cheshire and Warrington that were enrolled with an FE provider in 2018/19, where that provider was not based in Cheshire and Warrington. The table provides data on the number of residents from Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, and Warrington that were enrolled with a provider from a particular local authority. Data is only presented for those local authorities where such enrolments exceeded 50.

16-18 C&W residents learning with providers based outside of C&W				
	Cheshire East Residents	Cheshire West and Chester Residents	Warrington Residents	Total
Provider in				
Halton	1	33	339	373
St Helens	0	0	190	190
Wigan	0	1	179	180
Stockport	175	2	0	177
Wirral	1	141	4	146
Manchester	89	11	22	122
Liverpool	3	67	19	89
Staffordshire	74	3	0	77
Stoke-on-Trent	52	0	0	52
Source: ESFA Localities data cube (residency)				

There were a total of 1,354 Cheshire and Warrington residents aged 16-18 enrolled with providers outside of C&W. 422 of these were Cheshire East Residents, 111 were Cheshire West and Chester residents, and 821 were Warrington residents.

From the Table above it can be seen that 175 Cheshire East residents aged 16-18 enrolled with providers in Stockport; 141 Cheshire West and Chester residents aged 16-18 enrolled with providers in the Wirral; 339 Warrington residents aged 16-18 enrolled with providers in Halton; 190 Warrington residents aged 16-18 enrolled with providers in St. Helens; and, 179 Warrington residents aged 16-18 enrolled with providers in Wigan.

The table below presents the data for young people aged 16-18 not resident in Cheshire and Warrington that were enrolled with an FE provider in 2018/19, where that provider was based in Cheshire and Warrington. The table provides data on the number of residents from particular local authorities that were enrolled with a provider based in Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, or Warrington. Data is only presented for those local authorities where the number of 16-18 residents enrolled with a Cheshire and Warrington provider exceeded 100.

16-18 Learners not resident in C&W that were with C&W based providers 2018/19				
	Provider in Cheshire East	Provider in Cheshire West and Chester	Provider in Warrington	Total
Residents of				
Halton	74	92	293	454
Staffordshire	364	18	0	381
Shropshire	335	6	0	337
Wirral	101	104	2	205
Wigan	25	0	141	166
St Helens	10	2	148	159
Stockport	140	1	10	151
Derbyshire	130	0	2	132
Stoke-on-Trent	121	0	0	121

Source: ESFA Localities data cube (delivery)

2,952 16-18 learners resident outside of Cheshire and Warrington were enrolled with Cheshire and Warrington based providers – 1,675 with providers in Cheshire East; 454 with providers in Cheshire West and Chester; and 823 with providers in Warrington.

From the table above it can be seen that in 2018/19, 364 16-18 residents of Staffordshire enrolled with a provider in Cheshire East; 335 16-18 residents of Shropshire enrolled with a provider in Cheshire East; 101 16-18 residents of the Wirral enrolled with a provider in Cheshire East; 140 16-18 residents of Stockport enrolled with a provider in Cheshire East; 130 16-18 residents of Derbyshire enrolled with a provider in Cheshire East; 121 16-18 residents of Stoke-on-Trent enrolled with a provider in Cheshire East; 104 16-18 residents of the Wirral enrolled with a provider in Cheshire West and Chester; 293 16-18 residents of Halton enrolled with a provider in Warrington; 141 16-18 residents of Wigan enrolled with a provider in Warrington; and, 148 16-18 residents of St Helens enrolled with a provider in Warrington.

4.2 Patterns of Adult Learning

2018/19 was the final year that there was a national funding system for adult learning. From 2019/20, whilst management of the Adult Education Budget (AEB) remained the responsibility of the ESFA in most places, responsibility for management of AEB was also devolved to some Combined Authorities. Combined Authorities in the first wave of devolution included Greater Manchester and the Liverpool City Region.

Unless a provider has a contract, or some other agreement, with a Combined Authority (CA), there is no expectation in 2019/20 that they will receive funding for teaching residents of that CA. On the other hand, providers in CAs with devolved AEB are still funded by the ESFA for teaching residents outside of their home CA. This means that the pattern of delivery described below for 2018/19 is likely to have changed substantially in 2019/20.

The table below presents the data for adults aged 19+ resident in Cheshire and Warrington that were enrolled with an FE provider in 2018/19, where that provider was not based in Cheshire and Warrington. The table provides data on the number of residents from Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, and Warrington that were enrolled with a provider from a particular local authority. Data is only presented for those local authorities where such enrolments exceeded 100.

Adult (19+) residents learning with providers based outside of Cheshire and Warrington 2018/19				
	Cheshire East Residents	Cheshire West and Chester Residents	Warrington Residents	C&W Residents
Provider in				
Manchester	525	236	312	1073
Liverpool	64	335	213	612
Stockport	398	105	66	569
St Helens	11	52	466	529
Wirral	12	455	20	487
Halton	14	114	345	473
Lancashire	126	183	154	463
Stoke-on-Trent	416	24	11	451
Staffordshire	353	41	11	405
Trafford	102	56	140	298
Salford	73	34	135	242
Wigan	18	20	199	237
Sefton	13	70	131	214
Derbyshire	111	7	18	136
Shropshire	53	57	9	119
<i>Source: ESFA Localities data cube (residency)</i>				

There were 9,766 Cheshire and Warrington 19+ resident learners enrolled with providers based outside of the LEP area. 3,654 were residents of Cheshire East; 3028 were residents of Cheshire West and Chester; and 3,084 were residents of Warrington.

From the table above it can be seen that in 2018/19, 525 adult (19+) residents of Cheshire East enrolled with a provider based in Manchester; 525 adult (19+) residents of Cheshire East enrolled with a provider based in Manchester; 398 adult (19+) residents of Cheshire East enrolled with a provider based in Stockport; 416 adult (19+) residents of Cheshire East enrolled with a provider based in Stoke-on-Trent; 353 adult (19+) residents of Cheshire East enrolled with a provider based in Staffordshire; 236 adult (19+) residents of Cheshire West and Chester enrolled with a provider based in Manchester; 335 adult (19+) residents of Cheshire West and Chester enrolled with a provider based in Liverpool; 455 adults (19+) residents of Cheshire West and Chester enrolled with a provider based in the Wirral; 312 adult (19+) residents of Warrington enrolled with a provider based in Manchester; 213 adult (19+) residents of Warrington enrolled with a provider based in Liverpool; 466 adult (19+) residents of Warrington enrolled with a provider based in St Helens; and, 345 adult (19+) residents of Warrington enrolled with a provider based in Halton.

The table below presents the data for adults aged 19+ not resident in Cheshire and Warrington that were enrolled with an FE provider in 2018/19, where that provider was based in Cheshire and Warrington. The table provides data on the number of residents from particular local authorities that were enrolled with a provider based in Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, or Warrington. Data is only presented for those local authorities where the number of adult residents enrolled with a Cheshire and Warrington provider exceeded 250.

Adults (19+) not resident in Cheshire and Warrington, learning with Cheshire and Warrington providers 2018/19				
	Provider in Cheshire East	Provider in Cheshire West and Chester	Provider in Warrington	Total
Residents of				
Halton	61	310	975	1324
Wirral	76	1025	104	1199
St Helens	56	85	1017	1147
Wigan	81	103	945	1111
Staffordshire	711	70	50	823
Stockport	527	65	93	684
Liverpool	57	183	447	682
Manchester	293	66	263	621
Trafford	132	88	158	375
Lancashire	64	46	252	361
Stoke-on-Trent	286	38	27	349
Salford	47	33	238	314
Knowsley	28	61	224	308
Shropshire	224	52	12	286
Derbyshire	219	11	35	263
<i>Source: ESFA Localities data cube (delivery)</i>				

There were 14,845 adult residents of other local authorities enrolled with Cheshire and Warrington based providers in 2018/19. 4,499 were enrolled with providers in Cheshire East; 3,914 were

enrolled with providers in Cheshire West and Chester; and 6,432 were enrolled with providers in Warrington.

From the table above it can be seen that in 2018/19, 711 adult residents of Staffordshire enrolled with a provider in Cheshire East; 527 adult residents of Stockport enrolled with a provider in Cheshire East; 293 adult residents of Manchester enrolled with a provider in Cheshire East; 286 adult residents of Stoke-on-Trent enrolled with a provider in Cheshire East; 310 adult residents of Halton enrolled with a provider in Cheshire West and Chester; 1,025 adult residents of the Wirral enrolled with a provider in Cheshire West and Chester; 975 adult residents of Halton enrolled with a provider in Warrington; 1,017 adult residents of St Helens enrolled with a provider in Warrington; 945 adult residents of Wigan enrolled with a provider in Warrington; 447 adult residents of Liverpool enrolled with a provider in Warrington; 263 adult residents of Manchester enrolled with a provider in Warrington; and 252 adult residents of Lancashire enrolled with a provider in Warrington.

5. Inspections of Post-16 Education and Training in Cheshire and Warrington

5.1 Introduction

This section reports the findings of Ofsted inspections of education and training providers headquartered in Cheshire and Warrington. All reports published from 2017 have been reviewed including monitoring visits, short inspections, and full inspections. Where an Independent Training Provider has received an 'Inadequate' grade this has not been reported below as it is the policy of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) that these providers will no longer receive public funds for the delivery of further education and skills activity.

The table below summarises the Ofsted gradings awarded where a report has been reviewed. In addition, Ofsted has judged 12 new providers to be making 'Reasonable Progress' in this time.

Ofsted Inspections in Cheshire and Warrington 2017-2018				
	Outstanding	Good	Requires Improvement	Inadequate
Colleges, including sixth form and specialist and independent specialist colleges	1	5	0	0
Community Learning Providers	0	2	0	0
Independent Training Providers	1	1	3	n/a
<i>Source: Ofsted</i>				

Insofar as it has been possible to do so, the words used below are those used in the relevant inspection report. The wording used by Ofsted inspectors in their inspections is considered and nuanced, and reformulating or summarising Ofsted judgements is as likely to obscure as to illuminate issues. It is also important to note that an inspection provides a snapshot of a provider at a point in time. Ordinarily, providers will seek to address areas for improvement as soon as they have been identified by the inspectorate.

5.2 Colleges, including sixth form and specialist and independent specialist colleges

Cheshire College South and West

Good in 2019

The college was inspected at the end of 2019. Ofsted graded the college as 'Good'. The report included the following commentary:

"What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?"

Leaders and teachers have high expectations of what learners, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), can achieve on education programmes for young people. For example, teachers encourage learners on level 1 information technology programmes to be ambitious to work in areas such as cybersecurity. Teachers support learners on A-level programmes with additional workshops to help them address any knowledge gaps and achieve higher grades to be able to apply to elite universities. For example, learners studying A-level mathematics who are struggling with the progression from GCSE mathematics are provided with additional workshops.

Teachers plan the content of programmes logically so that learners acquire and practise skills as they progress through their programmes. For example, at the beginning of their programme, learners on level 3 art and design learn basic skills in how to use a sewing machine to draw on fabric and paper. As they progress, they develop more advanced skills in appliqué, dying fabrics and using an overlocker. This provides them with the knowledge and skills to design and create garments to a high standard for shows.

Learners on level 1 beauty therapy programmes learn the function of nails before carrying out basic manicure processes. They can explain about nail beds and growth and correctly label areas of the nail. This prepares them with the knowledge they need for their next level of study.

The curriculum at the Crewe campus for learners who aspire to work in childcare does not meet their aspirations. In a few programmes, teachers do not plan or link activities to help learners understand key concepts. For example, in level 2 health and social care, teachers do not use activities that check learners' understanding or consolidate the learning of new topics. In level 2 plumbing programmes, learners do not understand how the tasks they are completing lead to more complex tasks or how they relate to activities in the workplace.

Leaders and managers plan a highly effective range of adult learning programmes to meet the varying range of aspirations of adults. Teachers carefully consider the content and delivery of programmes so that adult learners build their knowledge and skills in a meaningful order. For example, in ESOL programmes, adults learn important speaking and listening skills first, then move on to simple and complex writing tasks. Adult learners in hairdressing vocational programmes learn how to carry out basic cuts before they learn more complex tasks, such as hair colouring and colour correction skills. Teachers use a range of activities that inspire and motivate learners. For example, in access to higher education, teachers help learners secure their knowledge through frequent quizzes to check what learners have learned and identify any gaps in their knowledge. Consequently, more adults achieve their qualifications and progress to employment or further learning.

Assessors use their vocational and technical knowledge and experience to plan programmes that meet the specific needs of apprentices and employers. For example, in engineering, assessors frequently visit the workplace of a large motor vehicle manufacturer to observe the work that teams undertake. This ensures that they have a detailed understanding of the requirements of the job role within the company to plan well-designed programmes. As a result, apprentices undertake additional qualifications in paint technology and finishing so that they gain the knowledge and skills to carry out their job roles to the high standards required when working on luxury cars.

Assessors and employers use a range of practical activities to help apprentices gain substantial new knowledge and skills. For example, employers in hospitality and catering take apprentices on visits to artisan and bespoke cheese producers and butchers. Apprentices learn the provenance of the ingredients they use so that they can confidently discuss with customers the source of the food products they use in their restaurants. Assessors in engineering plan and deliver topics cohesively. For example, apprentices study braking systems, which they can then link to subsequent topics of traction and steering. This helps them build the necessary components to underpin complex skills. Employers value the contribution apprentices' new knowledge, skills and behaviours make to their businesses.

Planning of the subcontracted curriculum for learners with high needs is weak. Teachers focus too much on the achievement of accredited qualifications and not enough on providing a curriculum that caters for their individual needs. Teachers do not use the detailed support information from

learners' education, health and care plans or the assessment of their individual requirements to plan and deliver an accessible, supportive and inclusive curriculum. For example, learners who cannot read fluently are given written recipe activities taken directly from the internet. Teachers do not plan useful activities or use aids such as pictures and symbols to help learners learn in a way that is accessible to them. Therefore, the pace at which learners progress is too slow.

In contrast, learners with high needs on vocational catering and hospitality programmes at the Crewe campus develop high-level technical skills. Teachers plan activities that help them build their knowledge and skills and remember more. For example, learners use quick response (QR) codes so that they can access videos of 'how to ...' for catering tasks, such as how to fillet fish. This helps learners build sustainable knowledge and skills.

Leaders and teachers provide learners and apprentices with a curriculum that extends beyond the knowledge and skills they need to complete their qualifications. For example, the content of the tutorial programme helps learners gain a wider understanding of political and social issues, such as the impact of domestic abuse on society, and current topics such as the general election. Learners and apprentices demonstrate their understanding of fundamental British values.

Learners and apprentices are provided with highly effective careers guidance, which they value greatly. Learners and apprentices know what they want to do next and what they need to do to get there.

Governors fully understand their role. They ensure that the college fulfils its legal duties and responsibilities. They provide effective financial management oversight and have continued to secure improvements to the quality of education that learners and apprentices receive during the merger process.

Leaders and managers use labour market information to provide programmes that meet regional and local needs of the communities in which campuses are located. Leaders are considerate of staff workload and well-being. Consequently, staff feel valued and enjoy working at the college."

The David Lewis Centre

Outstanding in 2017

The David Lewis Centre was inspected in the middle of 2017. The inspectorate determined that the overall effectiveness of the provider was 'Outstanding'. The inspection was summarised as follows:

"Governors and senior managers have successfully maintained a culture of high expectations and continuous improvement; as a result, all the strengths of the previous inspection have been either maintained or improved.

Specialist staff provide excellent behavioural support that enables students to manage their anxieties successfully and cope well in a range of social situations.

The specialist communication team supports and trains staff exceptionally well and ensures that all students use appropriate assistive technology and significantly improve their communication skills.

The multidisciplinary team is very skilled in working with students who have highly complex medical issues and learning difficulties and/or disabilities. As a result, students make outstanding progress from their starting points.

Governors know the strengths and areas for improvement in the college well. They are knowledgeable and experienced in working with complex learning difficulties and or disabilities.

Students benefit from the outstanding resources on campus and the wide range of external work placements which offer excellent opportunities to develop their work-related skills.

Improved partnerships continue to bring about many benefits for students in the form of increased work-related learning and community-based activities.

Students benefit from the enthusiasm and dedication of their tutors and enjoy the challenging and engaging activities that tutors plan for them. As a result, a very large majority of students successfully gain appropriate qualifications.

Teaching, learning and assessment continue to improve through robust performance management. However, in a small minority of instances, observers place too little emphasis on supporting staff to develop their teaching practice even further.”

Macclesfield College

Good in 2017

Macclesfield College was inspected at the end of 2017. The overall effectiveness of the College was assessed as being Good. The inspectors summarised their findings as follows:

“College leaders have fostered a culture of high expectation in the college and have been proactive in addressing most of the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

Learners and apprentices are well prepared for life and work in modern Britain. They are tolerant and respectful, have a good understanding of the threats of radicalisation and extremism, and feel safe and are safe at college and in the workplace.

Leaders and managers have forged extensive links with stakeholders and local and national employers, developing the curriculum to meet community, local and national skills needs.

Almost all learners benefit from high-quality external work experience that successfully supports them in making decisions about their future work and career aspirations.

Close working relationships with employers and stakeholders ensure that apprenticeships based on national standards are implemented skilfully, valued by employers and meet local, regional and national skills needs.

Learners benefit from very good impartial careers guidance and, as a result, make accurate and informed decisions about their next steps.

Support for learners is highly effective. As a result, learners such as care leavers and those with high needs, mental health difficulties or other significant personal barriers to learning complete their courses and achieve their qualifications.

Teaching, learning and assessment are not of a consistently high standard on adult learning programmes, or sufficiently challenging for the most able 16- to 19-year-olds on study programmes. As a result, a significant minority of learners do not make sufficient progress towards their targets.

Learners on 16 to 19 study programmes and adult learning programmes do not attend their lessons regularly enough.

Managers and governors do not challenge their teams enough to analyse weaknesses accurately and identify specific actions for sustained improvement. As a result, the self-assessment report and quality improvement plan are not precise enough.”

Priestly College

Good in 2019

Priestly College was inspected in the first half of 2019. Ofsted rates the overall effectiveness of the college as 'Good'. The inspectorate's findings were summarised as follows:

“Leaders and managers ensure that a very high proportion of students achieve their qualifications.

A large proportion of students achieve a high grade in their subjects on AS and vocational level 3 courses.

Good advice and guidance enable most students to move on to further study, higher education, employment or apprenticeships.

Students who receive funding for high needs receive a high-quality learning experience. Consequently, students achieve as well as their peers and make excellent progress.

Teachers plan course work effectively, which enables students to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding of topics.

Most students improve their work as result of the helpful feedback they receive from teachers.

Senior leaders, managers and staff nurture a supportive and inclusive culture. Students benefit from very good pastoral support.

Students enjoy their studies. Their behaviour is excellent, and they show respect for each other and towards college staff.

Students participate in a wide range of interesting and worthwhile additional activities that help them develop their personal, social and communication skills.

Governors and senior leaders ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of 16- to 19-year olds in Warrington and prepares them well for their next steps.

In a significant minority of lessons, teachers' expectations are too low. They do not challenge students to achieve the standards of work of which they are capable.

Attendance is too low on a small number of vocational courses, particularly at level 2.

Governors do not have sufficient understanding of further education to hold senior managers fully to account.”

Reaseheath College

Good in 2020

Reaseheath College was inspected at the beginning of 2020. Ofsted judged that the college continued to be a 'Good' provider. The report included the following commentary:

“What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders and managers have continued to develop and exploit their excellent links with regional, national and international businesses. This ensures that students and apprentices have access to very high-quality and up-to-date equipment for their studies. For example, agricultural machinery manufacturers loan the college specialist equipment when students are learning about a specific topic, such as global positioning systems.

Governors use their wide range of skills, which includes experience of further education, higher education, finance and land-based industries, very effectively to support and challenge senior leaders. They use their committee structure conscientiously in order to oversee the different aspects of the college's operation. They have a thorough understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement of the provision. They monitor the progress leaders and managers are making in improving the weaker aspects of the curriculum, while maintaining an accurate oversight of the stronger aspects.

As a result of teachers' and instructors' extensive industry experience, they expect very high standards from their students and apprentices. Students and apprentices achieve these standards consistently and develop excellent behaviours and attitudes to learning and work.

Teachers and instructors plan learning programmes with care. They ensure that what they teach and when they teach it helps students and apprentices to master more complex skills and knowledge over time. Frequently, teachers and trainers help students and apprentices develop more complex skills and knowledge than their qualification requires. This prepares them extremely well for employment because employers value the additional skills and knowledge that students and apprentices bring with them from college. For example, agricultural engineers learn to strip and rebuild four stroke engines. This is more than their qualification requires, but it helps them to understand how these engines work and how to diagnose faults.

Students and apprentices learn to work safely with animals, machinery, hand tools and chemicals due to the very clear emphasis that leaders and managers place on safe working. This permeates the work of the college and helps to ensure that very few accidents occur and students and apprentices work diligently.

Students and apprentices produce written work to a high standard that meets or exceeds the standard of their qualification and industry expectations. Teachers and assessors give students and apprentices constructive and developmental feedback on their work, which helps them improve. Students and apprentices use technical and vocational language confidently and accurately in their written work and during lessons.

Apprentices, particularly those studying agricultural engineering and food-related subjects, make excellent progress because teachers and trainers use a range of relevant and motivating teaching methods. They study in well-equipped practical facilities which emulate those found in industry. Their training at college helps them understand better what they are doing at work and why they are doing it. Dairy processing apprentices commented that the training they had received at college had helped them to understand much better the science behind what they were doing at work. Other apprentices were able to explain improvements they had suggested and implemented at work from what they had learned at college.

A very high proportion of students and apprentices get jobs or move on to higher levels of training or learning. They receive very high-quality, impartial careers advice and guidance from both specialist careers guidance staff and from their industry experienced teachers and assessors.

Although students with high needs make good progress with their social and communication skills, and develop greater independence at college, they do not always achieve their full academic potential. Teachers are not sufficiently skilled in developing more ambitious and complex learning goals for skills such as English, mathematics or employment from the targets in students' education, health and care (EHC) plans.

Teachers and assessors have been less successful at preparing their students and apprentices for the externally examined parts of their qualifications. As a result, a small minority of students and apprentices have not gained the qualifications they attended college to achieve. This has reduced their career options at the end of their course or, where possible, led them to resit examinations. Leaders and managers had identified this weakness previously and are helping teachers and assessors to gain the relevant teaching skills to ensure that a larger proportion of students and apprentices pass their examinations at the first attempt.

In a few subjects, such as construction and engineering, managers have not had adequate oversight of the apprenticeship provision. A few apprentices have not had sufficient training, reviews of their progress or had training at college which links to their training or job role at work. This has led to a small proportion of apprentices not achieving their qualification within the planned timescale or leaving the course early.”

Warrington and Vale Royal College Good in 2019

Warrington and Vale Royal College was inspected towards the end of 2019. Ofsted judged that the overall effectiveness of the college was ‘Good’. The report included the following commentary:

“What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?”

Leaders make skilful use of a range of local and regional information to inform and shape the curriculum offer. They tailor programmes to meet the needs of learners, employers and the priorities of local enterprise partnerships.

Assessors involve employers in the planning of the curriculum. Assessors adapt the order in which they deliver components of the curriculum to fit in with the work being completed by apprentices in their job. Apprentices develop the specialist work skills where shortages are identified. For example, construction apprentices learn how to build roof structures on site.

Employers value the new skills and knowledge that apprentices gain. For example, business administration apprentices work on information technology projects to increase efficiency. Most young people, adults and apprentices achieve their qualification.

In a few occupational areas, such as plumbing and joinery apprenticeships and in GCSE English and mathematics, the implementation of an ambitious curriculum is weak. Teachers in these subjects do not identify well enough the gaps in students’ knowledge and deliver the curriculum to build on what learners already know. Consequently, not all apprentices and learners improve their understanding to a high enough level.

Learners who have high needs on vocational courses develop the skills they need for work and independence. For example, in brickwork, learners with high needs get extra support to develop their proficiency and can build a wall to a high standard.

Teachers do not ensure that learners who have high needs on foundation courses have access to an ambitious curriculum. For example, they do not set challenging enough goals for them that link well to their education, health and care plans.

Teachers and assessors plan learning activities carefully to reinforce knowledge. For example, on the level 3 media course, teachers discuss with students the key features of successful film making, such as the planning and reviewing of budgets. Students consolidate their knowledge by applying it in planning, making and editing their own films to commercial standards.

Most teachers and assessors set high expectations for what learners and apprentices can achieve. They check understanding and allow them time to practise, review and recall their learning. For example, adults on beauty courses practise on each other and then on friends before they consolidate their skills by practising on clients and completing more complex spa treatments.

Most teachers and assessors address any misconceptions in learners' and apprentices' subject knowledge. Teachers reinforce the importance of thorough research. They encourage learners to develop their understanding through skilful questioning and by checking learners' understanding of key concepts. For example, learners on access to higher education courses use research methods well to develop a deeper understanding of topical issues. They use their new knowledge to skilfully debate different views.

Most learners and apprentices receive useful feedback from their teachers and assessors. This allows them to reflect on their learning and identify how they can improve further. For example, art and design learners improve their critiquing skills when they review their portfolio, and this helps them to improve their practical techniques.

Most young people and adult learners enjoy a wide range of useful activities that complement their programme and develop them as individuals. For example, catering learners are successful in prestigious work skills competitions. They quickly develop the skills and attitudes to be professional chefs.

Attendance in most classes visited by inspectors for young people and apprentices is high. In access to higher education, beauty therapy and theatrical and media make-up, attendance of adults was too low.

In classrooms and around the college, learners demonstrate excellent conduct and show respect for each other. Apprentices model and adopt professional standards. Most learners on programmes for young people and those who have high needs complete meaningful work experience or internships.

Most learners and apprentices receive high-quality information, advice and guidance. They make well-informed choices about courses matched to their individual needs and intended career aspirations. In a few cases, such as electrical installation, teachers do not ensure that the curriculum is ambitious.

The senior leadership of the college is highly effective. Senior leaders have developed and implemented a clear strategy that has resulted in sustained improvement across the merged institution. They have reviewed the curriculum to ensure that courses are not needlessly duplicated and to ensure that there are clear progressions routes. They have ensured that most learners and apprentices, including those completing courses with subcontractors, have access to an ambitious curriculum.

Staff morale is high, and most teachers feel valued. Leaders provide support and opportunities for staff to develop their subject expertise. For example, teachers in beauty receive specialised spa training. Electrical teachers and assessors complete the new wiring regulations training.

Governors make a valuable contribution to the oversight and the effectiveness of the college. They effectively hold the senior leadership team to account. They have a wide range of business and educational skills that enable them to monitor the quality of education effectively.”

5.3 Community Learning Providers

Cheshire East Council

Good in 2017

Cheshire East Council was subject to a short inspection in the middle of 2017. The inspector determined that the Council continued to be a 'Good' provider. The short inspection findings were summarised as follows:

“Experienced governors are determined to provide courses that support community improvements and work with the most disadvantaged people in the local area. Governors receive helpful reports on attendance, retention and achievement rates, which helps them provide a good level of scrutiny, challenge and support to senior leaders and managers of the service.

Managers use effective quality improvement strategies to ensure that the quality of courses, including those delivered by subcontractors, is of a good standard. The self-assessment report is largely accurate in identifying the key strengths and weaknesses of the provision. For example, leaders put effective strategies in place to improve governance. The quality improvement plan identifies key actions to bring about improvements to the service. However, the targets set sometimes lack sufficient detail to set clear and defined milestones so that managers and governors can assess their progress accurately.

Managers have implemented a rigorous commissioning process which risk assesses each subcontractor. Managers ensure that the courses that subcontractors provide meet the local and regional needs and the specific objectives of the council. Managers implement rigorous quality improvement strategies so that the quality of learning is of a consistently high standard. Managers carry out unannounced visits to sample the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and to monitor the attendance of learners to ensure that the good quality is maintained.

While council staff accurately identify the main strengths and areas for improvement when they observe lessons, they tend to overstate the strengths. They do not focus sufficiently well on the learning that is taking place or the progress that learners make in the lesson. Recent changes to the lesson observation process mean that teachers now receive feedback following their observation, and this helps them to improve their practice.

In 2015/16, the proportion of adults who remained on their course to the end and achieved their qualification was high. Attendance and retention in the current year are very high. Predicted pass rates, including for English and mathematics, are high in the current year. The vast majority of learners on accredited courses progress to further study or employment, or remain in work.

Teachers track learners' progress effectively and identify those at risk of leaving their course early or who are struggling with their work. However, managers do not always collate the monitoring information to ensure that the right actions are taken quickly in order to improve achievement rates further.

While learners on non-accredited courses develop self-confidence and often improve their health and well-being, the number of learners who are unemployed and go on to gain employment is too low.

Learners are often set challenging work, for example learners on beauty courses carry out pedicures and manicures on clients to industry standards and deadlines. More advanced information technology learners benefit from additional activities, which extend their skills and knowledge.

Learners' behaviour is good and they treat each other and their teachers with respect. Their attendance is high. The majority of learners make good progress on their course. On accredited courses, learners develop the skills and knowledge that they need for work. For example, they achieve their basic hygiene certificate, which they need to work in the catering industry. Learners on job-search courses develop their own curriculum vitae, which develops their literacy and word-processing skills and helps them find work.

Teachers develop learners' mathematical and English skills effectively. For example, learners practise mathematics calculations through weighing and measuring tasks and understand how to convert from imperial to metric measures. They develop their writing and word-processing skills when writing letters and when blogging. Learners develop their self-confidence in spoken English; for example, learners on warehousing courses quickly learn how to present information to their peers.

On English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses, teachers' assessment of what their learners can already do at the start of the course is detailed and thorough. Teachers use the results of assessments effectively to plan learning activities so that learners make good progress. For example, learners develop their speaking skills so that they are able to pronounce correctly verb endings in the past tense.

In a very small minority of cases on short courses, learners receive feedback too late to help them to improve their work. While most teachers set effective short-term goals, they do not always ensure that learners reflect effectively on what they have learned."

Chester West and Chester Council Good in 2018

Cheshire West and Chester Council was subject to a short inspection at the beginning of 2018. The inspector determined that the Council continued to be a 'Good' provider. The short inspection findings were summarised as follows:

"Managers monitor often, and in detail, learners' achievements, including learners in subcontractors. They intervene effectively when necessary to ensure that a high proportion of learners complete their courses. In 2016/17, the proportion of learners who achieved their accredited qualifications was high. A similarly high proportion of learners achieved their personal goals on courses that do not lead to formal qualifications. Most learners on English and mathematics courses were successful.

Managers monitor learners' attendance particularly well. They take effective measures to support learners; as a result they attend regularly and on time and improve their employment prospects.

The proportion of learners who gain employment, start their own businesses or move on to accredited courses or training is not high enough. Managers do not set clear and demanding targets for learners' progress. Consequently, they cannot determine whether their courses help individual learners to achieve their next steps.

Following the previous inspection, managers have improved the procedures to monitor and improve the quality of teaching and learning. They evaluate thoroughly the quality of teaching, learning and assessment that learners receive from subcontractors. They sample learners' work regularly to ensure that assessment of learners on courses without formal qualifications is accurate and reliable.

Managers identify accurately when tutors' practices require improvement. In too many instances, managers' evaluations focus too much on what tutors do and not enough on the skills that learners

develop and the progress that they make. Consequently, tutors do not receive the feedback necessary to support them to improve.

Since the previous inspection, managers have improved the management of subcontractors. They regularly monitor and review their performance. When underperformance is identified, they provide good support and staff development to help subcontractors improve quickly and terminate the contract of those who do not improve. However, they do not monitor sufficiently the progression of learners' progression to employment, further studies or training in individual subcontractors. They do not set clear and demanding progression targets for learners studying in individual subcontractors.

Leaders and managers have shaped successfully the provision to improve the prospects of learners. Since the previous inspection, they have increased the proportion of courses that lead to formal qualifications, such as courses to improve learners' skills in English and mathematics. Learners benefit from attending lessons that develop their skills for employment in West Cheshire and Cheshire, for example in retail and customer service. Managers have worked with employers to offer learners the specific courses that employers require, including courses in logistics. However, leaders and senior managers do not use information about the range of vacancies and skill shortages well enough to ensure that all courses provide learners with the skills that employers require or to provide learners with clear progression routes towards employment.

Tutors use information on learners' starting points well to set them activities that develop new skills. They use their experience and expertise competently to help learners develop good practical skills and knowledge for their next steps. For example, learners on beauty therapy courses learn how to identify contraindications before carrying out client treatments such as facials. They develop good specialist vocabulary relevant to their field of study.

Tutors provide good support for learners that helps them to increase their confidence and improve their everyday lives. Learners on family learning courses develop skills to help their child to enhance their art skills along with improving their language skills. For example, they use the correct language such as 'smudging' when using charcoal to draw.

On courses that do not lead to formal qualifications, most tutors record accurately what learners have achieved. As identified in the self-assessment report, not all tutors set learners demanding personal targets for their skill development.

Learners receive good advice and guidance before they start their courses, and as a result most stay and complete. Managers have not ensured that all learners, including those in subcontractors, receive impartial advice about their next steps."

5.4 Independent Training Providers

Cogent Skills Training

Requires Improvement 2020

Cogent Skills Training had a full inspection by Ofsted at the start of 2020. The inspectorate determined that the provider 'Requires Improvement'. The report included the following commentary:

"What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?"

Leaders have taken appropriate action to improve the quality of education since the previous monitoring visit. They have put in place an experienced sub-committee that advises and holds leaders and senior managers to account. Leaders now have a better oversight of the quality of education and the progress that apprentices make on their programme. Where apprentices make slow progress, leaders ensure that apprentices receive intensive support to help them catch up.

Leaders, managers and assessors have developed a well-thought-out curriculum that meets the needs of most employers. The content is taught in a logical order to ensure that apprentices learn and remember the key principles they need to know in preparation for their end-point assessment. Seven learners have completed their apprenticeship standard on time. However, too many have not achieved their targeted grades due to assessors and tutors not providing a good enough standard of education and training for apprentices.

Assessors do not use the results of assessments that apprentices complete at the start of the programme to plan their learning. This results in assessors not challenging apprentices enough to achieve their potential. Too often assessors settle for apprentices producing work of the minimum standard as opposed to motivating them to produce work of a higher level.

Assessors are not effective in supporting apprentices to improve their work. While assessors identify improvements through progress reviews and the assessment of apprentices' work, they do not always ensure that apprentices make the improvements they need to achieve higher grades. For example, level 5 operational management apprentices continue to make the same mistakes. They make spelling mistakes, grammatical errors and referencing expectations are not consistently implemented in assignments.

Apprentices develop a broad range of additional skills throughout their apprenticeship. For example, they develop their research, critical thinking and debating skills through their off- and on-the job learning. This helps them to solve problems in the workplace and put forward their points of view on a concise and confident manner.

Leaders have been too slow to put in place arrangements to support apprentices in their ongoing career choices. While they have begun to put training in place for staff and workplace mentors, it is too early to see whether these initiatives have had any impact on improving the careers guidance for apprentices.

Leaders' management of subcontractors is not good enough. They place too much focus on compliance checklists and financial targets. They do not place enough emphasis on the quality of education that apprentices receive. At some of these subcontractors, tutors do not check that apprentices fully understand the concepts being taught before moving on to the next topic. For example, in an HND chemistry session, tutors do not check apprentices understanding of the differences between transitional, rotational and vibrational energy before moving on to thermodynamics in more detail."

Partnership Training Limited

Requires Improvement in 2020

Partnership Training Ltd had a full inspection by Ofsted at the start of 2020. The inspectorate determined that the provider 'Requires Improvement'. The report included the following commentary:

"What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?"

Leaders and managers have a clear and aspirational vision to provide high-quality programmes for apprentices, but this is not yet fully implemented or realised. Leaders recognise the need to develop further their curriculum strategy. Leaders, with employers, have reviewed the content of the curriculum and the order in which it is taught. However, this new curriculum was only implemented recently.

Although leaders and managers have taken effective steps to improve the curriculum for apprentices, there is still much work to do. This is because leaders and managers do not monitor effectively the quality of education that apprentices receive. They are unable to identify sufficiently the areas of weakness. They have been too slow to implement the actions required to bring about swift improvement. Governors do not always challenge leaders well enough to improve the quality of apprenticeship provision.

Despite this, leaders and managers are highly committed to an apprentice-centred approach. They support apprentices to gain new knowledge and skills, to build their confidence and to achieve their personal and career goals. Apprentices say that they are pleased with the incremental gains that they make in their knowledge and skills. Leaders and managers have recently introduced a 'learning accolade' scheme which recognises and rewards apprentices' achievements and learning goals.

Trainer/assessors are appropriately qualified and are highly experienced within the care sector. Focused staff development helps them to develop their training and assessment skills. For example, all trainer/assessors take education and training awards at level 3 and level 5. They regularly update their assessor qualifications and occupational skills.

In the workplace, most apprentices develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours. They develop their communication skills effectively because of the coaching that they receive from both their trainer/assessors and their employers. For example, apprentices told inspectors about the specific communication strategies that they use with services users who have autism spectrum disorder. Apprentices use the verbal active listening pattern to interact with service users, employing both verbal and non-verbal communication strategies.

Trainer/assessors use memorable examples and case studies to help apprentices remember more, deepen their understanding and apply their learning in the workplace. For example, learning about the signs and symptoms of diabetes helps apprentices to signpost service users who are displaying these indicators to relevant healthcare professionals.

Most apprentices value the one-to-one support, training and feedback from trainer/assessors that helps them to improve their work and to learn new knowledge and skills. However, this is not yet consistent for all apprentices, which means that not all apprentices make the progress that they could. As a result, too many apprentices do not complete their programmes within the expected time frame.

Leaders and managers do not have high enough expectations of all apprentices. Apprentices who fail to meet assignment deadlines do not receive any sanctions or support to help them meet future deadlines. These apprentices do not make swift enough progress through their programmes.

A few trainer/assessors do not check their apprentices' learning before moving on to the next tasks or topic. As a result, these apprentices have gaps in their knowledge, which results in them making slower progress than their peers.

Trainer/assessors have changed their approach to preparing for end-point assessment (EPA). They now prepare apprentices fully for their EPA. For example, they have practice professional discussions

with their apprentices. Many apprentices who have recently have taken their EPA have achieved merit grades.

Apprentices benefit from appropriate careers advice and guidance about the care sector. A clear progression route from level 2 to level 5 is in place. Apprentices progress to higher-level qualifications and/or gain additional responsibility or promotion in the workplace.

Apprentices develop the knowledge and skills they need to keep themselves and their service users safe. For example, apprentices who are lone workers carry out appropriate risk assessments to keep themselves and their service users safe.

Apprentices demonstrate a professional work ethic and apply themselves confidently in their job roles. Apprentices are polite, friendly and respectful to peers, managers and their service users.”

Simian Risk Management Ltd Requires Improvement in 2019

At the start of 2019, Ofsted inspected Simian Risk Management Ltd and determined that the provider ‘Requires Improvement’. At the end of 2019, Ofsted undertook a monitoring visit to the provider, where it determined that ‘Reasonable Progress’ had been made in addressing the issues identified in the inspection earlier that year. The findings of the full inspection were summarised as:

“This is a provider that requires improvement:

- Leaders and managers have been slow to prioritise improving the quality of teaching and learning and the progress that apprentices and learners make on their programmes.
- The board of directors does not have clear oversight of the quality of education and training that apprentices and learners receive. They do not receive reports with sufficient detail to enable them to hold leaders and managers to account.
- The quality of feedback provided to apprentices is weak and hinders their progress, particularly in improving their writing and mathematics.
- Instructors do not identify or record sufficiently the knowledge and skills apprentices and learners gain in the workplace to plan off-the job training. Consequently, they do not always make the progress of which they are capable.
- The proportion of adult learners who achieve their level 3 scaffolding qualification is too low because too many learners leave the course early.
- Apprentices and learners are not sufficiently knowledgeable about the potential dangers associated with radicalisation and extremism.

The provider has the following strengths:

- Leaders and managers have established strong relationships with employers and key stakeholders in the scaffolding sector. They work closely with these partners in the industry to develop the curriculum in this high-risk specialist area.
- Apprentices develop good practical skills and knowledge which they use well in their workplaces to benefit their employer’s business.
- Leaders, managers and instructors use their industry expertise very well to promote the high standards that apprentices and learners need to work in the scaffolding sector. As a result, apprentices demonstrate high levels of professional behaviour, particularly in relation to health and safety at work.”

System Group Ltd Good in 2017

System Group Ltd was subject to a full inspection at the beginning of 2017. The inspectorate determined that the provider had improved to become a 'Good' provider. The full inspection findings were summarised as follows:

"A high proportion of adult learners on short employability courses progress into employment.

Apprentices and learners develop good work-related knowledge, skills and understanding.

Apprentices and learners gain additional qualifications that increase their chances of obtaining employment.

Learners have good opportunities to learn in realistic working environments which prepare them for the world of work.

A large majority of apprentices contribute to their employers' businesses very successfully.

All apprentices benefit from the very regular contact, one-to-one coaching and support they receive from their trainer/assessors.

Apprentices and learners have extremely good knowledge of safe working practices which they apply correctly.

Most trainer/assessors have good technical ability and subject knowledge that they use skilfully to coach and develop apprentices' and learners' practical skills.

Apprentices and learners display high standards of behaviour, professionalism and mutual respect for each other and their trainer/assessors.

Apprentices and learners are very positive about their learning experiences; they take considerable pride in their work.

Senior leaders and managers have successfully improved the quality of training and achievement rates by implementing staff accountability at all levels.

Subcontractors are now monitored very closely, and this is also improving achievement rates and the quality of apprentices' and learners' training.

Trainer/assessors do not use initial assessment results routinely to plan apprentices' learning.

Trainer/assessors do not challenge the most able apprentices sufficiently to make the best use of their learning potential.

Trainer/assessors do not give all apprentices and learners sufficient help to enable them to improve their writing skills and correct their spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors.

Apprentices' knowledge and learners' awareness of radicalisation, extremism and British values are not sufficiently developed.

The process for observing teaching, learning and assessment is not yet rigorous enough."

TTE Training Ltd Outstanding in 2017

TTE Ltd was subject to a full inspection in the summer of 2017. The inspectorate determined that the provider was 'Outstanding'. The full inspection findings were summarised as follows:

“Leaders and managers have established successfully a culture of very high expectations throughout TTE Training Limited.

Staff set very high standards for learners and apprentices; they expect them to attain excellence in their specific engineering specialism.

Learners and apprentices take pride in their work; they achieve consistently high standards on their programme and in their workplace.

Leaders have developed excellent partnerships with local and regional employers, thus creating excellent opportunities for learners and apprentices to develop very successful careers in the engineering and manufacturing sector.

Employers and managers develop challenging and relevant programmes that result in apprentices achieving very high-level technical skills and knowledge that benefit their employer.

Tutors and training officers make excellent use of their extensive industrial knowledge and experience to develop apprentices’ technical knowledge and skills quickly, which they apply competently and confidently in the workplace.

The large majority of apprentices progress to higher-level technical qualifications in the final year of their apprenticeship.

Tutors and training officers plan training and learning sessions to a very high standard. They encourage apprentices to become inquisitive learners and develop their problem-solving skills to benefit the engineering industry.

Tutors and training officers provide highly effective feedback to learners and apprentices in lessons which helps them to improve their knowledge and skills quickly.

Tutors and training officers help learners and apprentices to develop their mathematical skills further to support their work in the engineering industry.

Learners on 16 to 19 study programmes are prepared thoroughly for their next steps, and the majority progress to employment or apprenticeships in the engineering industry.

Apprentices’ achievements are outstanding; almost all apprentices complete their apprenticeships by the planned end date.

Tutors and training officers do not help learners and apprentices to improve their written English skills.

The standard of education and training for learners on 16 to 19 study programmes is not as high as that on the apprenticeship programmes which is outstanding.”

5.5 New Providers

The ESFA has undertaken procurement activity over the past few years which has resulted in several new providers securing contracts to deliver publicly funded learning. A number of these new providers have been subject to Ofsted monitoring visit to judge what progress has been made by the provider to meet programme requirements; to deliver high quality outcomes for learners; and to ensure effective safeguarding. The following providers have been deemed to be making ‘Reasonable Progress’ following a monitoring visit:

- The University of Chester Monitoring Visit in 2019
- Peak Accountancy Training Limited Monitoring Visit in 2020
- NTG Training Limited Monitoring Visit in 2019
- Plato Training (UK) Ltd Monitoring Visit in 2019
- Clifford College Ltd Monitoring Visit in 2019
- PBC Associates Limited Monitoring Visit in 2019
- Acorn Training Ltd Monitoring Visit in 2019
- KMF Precision Sheet Metal Limited Monitoring Visit in 2019
- Stepping Stones Education and Training Limited Monitoring Visit in 2019
- Kids Allowed Limited Monitoring Visit in 2019
- Certas Energy UK Limited Monitoring Visit in 2019
- Intelligencia Training Limited Monitoring Visit in 2018

6. LEP Skills Capital Investment

6.1 Project Commissioning

In 2019 Cheshire and Warrington LEP consulted on how best to invest £5 million of Local Growth Fund in the specialist equipment needed to deliver digital and STEM-related training and education to as many residents as possible across Cheshire and Warrington. The LEP was particularly keen to stimulate new ideas that would inspire and inform about new technologies.

Following this consultation, the LEP invited bids across three pots of investment:

Investment Pot 1 – Small Projects

The LEP offered to fund a maximum of five investments of up to £20,000 each for specialist equipment that could be taken into schools, colleges, libraries and other community centres or could be easily accessed from key locations. The objective was to spark interest and change mind-sets about how digital and new technologies can transform lives. The equipment could provide support for short, focused modules of training both face to face and e-learning which develop skills at pace and which is relevant and aligned to business needs.

The LEP was particularly interested in investments in specialist equipment that could demonstrate the transformations that individuals and businesses can achieve by acquiring digital skills that address skill shortages and support the transformation of business practices to make businesses more productive, more able to adopt clean energy for sustainable growth and highlight the importance of cyber security.

Investment Pot 2 – Medium Projects

The LEP offered to fund a maximum of two investments of up to £250,000 each for specialist equipment that could be used to deliver digital and advanced engineering training and education that are particularly important to improve the competitiveness and raise the productivity of one or two specific groups of employers or sectors of industry within Cheshire and Warrington. The intention was that the specialist equipment would be accessible to as wide a range of individual residents of Cheshire and Warrington as possible.

Investment Pot 3 – Large Projects

The LEP offered to fund a maximum of five investments of between £500,000 and £1,000,000 for specialist equipment that could be used to upskill and reskill the existing workforce to transform digital and advanced manufacturing skills across all sectors of business in Cheshire and Warrington. The intention was that the specialist equipment would be sufficiently generic as to enable as many businesses as possible to transform their business practices at a faster pace and through cross-sector collaboration.

This bidding process resulted in investment being made in the following projects:

Investment Pot 1 – Small Projects

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| • Cheshire College South and West | The Digital Hub - Digital Doorstep |
| • Livewire | Made.Digital |
| • UTC Warrington | Cyber Security and Networking Lab |
| • Warrington & Vale Royal College | Community Digital Learning Hub |
| • YouthFed | Yocto Digital |

Investment Pot 2 – Medium Projects

- Astra Zeneca STEM Centre / Digital Innovation Hub
- Carpe Diem Inspiration Open To All - IOTA

Investment Pot 3 – Large Projects

- Cheshire College South and West The Digital Hub - Project 4.0
- Macclesfield College Digital Skills Hub
- Reaseheath College Centre for Dairy Automation and Robotic Milking
- Reaseheath College Vertical Farming Centre
- University of Chester High Performance Private Cloud
- Warrington & Vale Royal College Advanced M/facturing Engineering Training Centres

Each of these is described below.

6.2 Capital Projects

The Digital Hub - Digital Doorstep (Cheshire College South and West)

An innovative and agile project to provide schools, colleges, and business with the opportunity to experiment with technology and ignite an interest in digital careers within a safe and supportive environment.

The project facilitates the development of clear digital career pathways and supports the foundation skills required by today's employers and future Industries. The project focuses on developing and exploring skills and career pathways in the digital industry. The project provides a portable package of specialist equipment to support the development of skills and career pathways. This includes equipment such as hand-held 3D scanners, 3D printers, 360-degree cameras and Virtual Reality/Augmented Reality headsets. The portable package is taken out to local schools, colleges, businesses and the wider community.

360-degree cameras when paired with VR and AR headsets allow learners to be transported to different settings that may otherwise be unobtainable. 3D scanners and printers allow for a hands on experience of developments in the digital industries.

The project aims to inspire users through the use of the portable technology; enhancing curriculum by identifying how technology is used within the workplace. Businesses also have use of the equipment; to support training and development of their workforce, and the option to try products before investing.

Made.Digital (Livewire)

The project builds the digital creative skills highlighted by the Government and economists as being necessary for the workforce of the future; and the critical thinking skills crucial to the development of digital economies, communications and smart cities. Young people learn how to use technology to their benefit and understand how it works, and rather than being passive consumers of tablets or smart phones they create and design equipment themselves.

Stage 1: Culture Warrington is delivering 10 bespoke training workshops (monthly) for 30 local artists and small business' ranging from simple word press and social media training to AR and coding designed to upskill local business and develop artists' creativity. Penketh Spark is delivering 10 bespoke training workshops for Warrington schools with education/ STEAM focus. Live Wire Warrington is delivering specialist training workshops to library branches to upskill staff to deliver a varied programme of digital technology workshops throughout the borough.

Stage 2: Will consist of the delivery of digital workshops in the community and school, working together to create wider opportunities such as paid work for artists.

Cyber Security and Networking Lab (UTC Warrington)

An investment in specialist equipment to support the development of computer network management and cyber security skills. The equipment complements the UTC's cyber curriculum. The equipment is located at Warrington UTC but can be moved and installed at a range of temporary sites.

Community Digital Learning Hub - Winsford and Northwich (Warrington & Vale Royal College)

The project provides digital equipment for use in the community by adult learners and the workforce of local businesses, situated in 'Community Digital Learning Hubs' at Northwich and Winsford libraries. The college is co-locating some of its adult and community (ACL) provision at the libraries and is augmenting existing learning opportunities there, primarily focusing upon digital familiarisation and upskilling.

In addition to digital basic, the college is offering coding and 3D design training. As well as engaging a range of learners with this technology, the college is upskilling a range of volunteers, currently engaged in work with the libraries, to add to their skill-set and experience. There was already an existing 'IT buddy' volunteer offer in CW&C libraries and this project allows for expansion of this, further inspiring residents, especially those progressing into employment, to engage with digital learning and upskilling.

The project is upskilling a wide range of residents who are potential workforce for businesses. Used primarily by adult learners primarily, it is also be available for library staff and volunteers to use with children and young people, expanding the library service's existing coding and digital club offer which has been restricted in the past by lack of access to equipment and trained volunteers.

Yocto Digital (Youth Fed)

The Up Skill Cyber Academy project operates to achieve the following two main Goals:

- **Cyber Skills:** Inspire potential talents and bridge the gaps to create a pipeline for cybersecurity.
- **Cyber Safety:** Make people safe in the digital world.

The programme is aimed at people who are interested in gaining cyber and digital skills or simply wish to know more about cybersecurity - even with no related background or prior knowledge. At the Security Operations Centre (SOC), staff run a series of workshops starting with the Cyber Security Taster Session. During these workshops, participants have the chance to do some threat hunting and cybersecurity simulations on 'real-time' cyberattacks. Participants then engage in a series of exercises designed to get them thinking like cybersecurity professionals.

STEM Centre / Digital Innovation Hub (Astra Zeneca)

This project uses a building located in the centre of the site which has been refurbished to act as a central hub for the site to visit and explore new and innovative technologies. This space is also used for STEM related activities, including conducting STEM lessons and housing work experience students who can play with and explore the technology.

Inspiration Open To All – IOTA (Carpe Diem)

A 21st Century Skills Lab, open to all (Inspiration Open To All - IOTA) . With hands-on workshops, in Warrington’s Pyramid, IOTA inspires and trains participants to increase their STEM confidence and raise aspirations across new technology and advanced engineering.

Centrally located for onsite learning and the distribution of portable resources to ensure the greatest possible public access; IOTA’s highly qualified trainers utilise specialist equipment manufactured by the world’s leading education brands. Delivering programme streams based on industry specific and curriculum-based needs; IOTA addresses the challenge of localised skills gaps and the contention that “You can’t be, what you can’t see”.

The Digital Hub - Project 4.0 - Crewe and Ellesmere Port (Cheshire College South and West)

This project sees the development of a Digital Hub that will contain specialist cutting-edge equipment to support the transformation and acceleration of Digital and Advanced Manufacturing skills across Cheshire and Warrington.

A mobile training centre will provide outreach services to those areas of the region further away from the Digital Hub. The College will provide courses to upskill and reskill existing workforces and work closely with schools and Colleges to promote digital as the career choice to future workforces. Using both immersive virtual and augmented reality, will show the direct application of theory to practical problem solving within the production environment. In addition, the project will demonstrate how the innovative application of digital technology and advanced manufacturing has completely changed the face of business operations improving productivity and effectiveness, providing sustainability and new platforms for business growth.

Digital Skills Hub (Macclesfield College)

The project intends to provide new opportunities to engage businesses and individuals in digital skills. It will focus on providing a range of learners, employers and businesses with programmes that will help to increase digital and STEM-related skills within the region. In response to both national and regional feedback from businesses, and to achieve success for employers within Cheshire, the Digital Skills Hub will provide opportunities for a range of skills development and expertise. The project is split into five areas: agile project management; UX/UI user experience and user interface design; cyber-security; coding; and robotics. It will be for mixed use by both learners within an education setting and from businesses across the region but will also include a mobile element which will prioritise the development of foundation skills that will underpin all essential digital skills.

The digital enhancements and programmes that will be offered and supported by the Hub will contribute towards the wider objective of linking the areas' digital capabilities to drive digital developments in key sectors across the economy. Through close collaboration with employers, the

Hub will deliver more relevant and job-related training befitting the skills requirements. The Hub will also develop an outreach programme and community-based offer.

Centre for Dairy Automation and Robotic Milking (Reaseheath College)

The Centre will respond to the skills needs of the dairy sector in Cheshire and Warrington, the north west region, and the wider dairy industry. It is estimated that 900-1,000 farms in England and Wales are now using automatic milking systems (around 10% of all farms). Industry data indicates that 50% of dairy farms will need to move to robotic milking systems over the next 10 years in order to remain viable.

The dairy industry is facing significant challenges in attracting/recruiting trained and skilled labour for the robotic milking sector. This is expected to continue whilst at the same time, training, education and skills provision relating to automation, robotics and data management and use, throughout the region, is limited.

Potential employment opportunities within Cheshire and neighbouring counties may be as high as 800 digital and STEM skilled workers over a 10-year period. As such, the Centre at Reaseheath College will play a significant role in creating future high-quality jobs by providing people with the skills and training, as well as changing the mindset within the sector.

Vertical Farming Centre (Reaseheath College)

Vertical farming is a relatively new but increasingly important method of food production where growing units are stacked vertically, and temperature, light, humidity, CO₂, nutrients and water are precisely supplied to growing plants under carefully controlled conditions. Vertical farming systems are data driven and use technologies such as LED lighting, hydroponic/aeroponic growing systems, robotics, automated environmental and nutrient control, and enhanced biosecurity, to optimise crop production.

There is estimated to be 700+ production horticulture businesses in the northwest, employing over 6,000 workers. An ageing workforce and recruiting/retaining staff skilled and competent in using digital and advanced systems/technologies, are real challenges.

The Reaseheath Vertical Farming Centre will grow a variety of salads, herbs and high value plants, including nutraceuticals, superfoods and phytonutrient-rich specialist crops. It will have sufficient scale, and will use technology, systems and processes, that are relevant to employers' operations, supporting career progression and ensuring that the training and education provided has real value and impact.

High Performance Private Cloud (University of Chester)

To build a client-server computing environment for mixed use by industry and education. The equipment will be split into two parts:

Private Cloud Server and Network estate (hosted within The University's Riverside Data Centre) for remote access by businesses/individuals from across Cheshire and Warrington). The cloud can host learning materials, allow learners access to software (which would usually be costly for an individual or SME's to purchase) and reduce the need for learners/trainers to travel.

Fixed and mobile client access devices, to help demonstrate to businesses and individuals the benefits of using the cloud – the project will buy and equip a van, including tablets/laptops, 3D

scanners, drones and Hololense. The project can support other skills projects, via remote use of the private cloud, including the Accelerate project.

Advanced Manufacturing Engineering Training Centres at Warrington and Winsford (Warrington & Vale Royal College)

The two AMET centres are situated at each of the college's campuses in Warrington and Winsford, housing much needed industry-specific, specialist equipment used to enhance the skills of prospective and current employees in the engineering and manufacturing industries.

The AMET centres will enhance the skills of prospective and current employees through the acquisition of much needed industry-specific, specialist equipment, primarily for skills training and technical education that meets employers' and sectoral needs. The AMET centres will be accessible to employers, other training providers and schools across the Warrington and Vale Royal areas.

The specialist equipment has been agreed following consultation with employers and will enhance existing engineering resources at the college's campuses. This specialist equipment will enable the college to develop into a sub-regional 'centre of excellence' for advanced manufacturing and engineering and a 'hub' that meets employers' and the LEP's stated ambition to raise levels of productivity and innovation to compete at the highest level.