

West Suffolk College

Transforming learner support with Cognassist

Background

West Suffolk College is on a mission to be the best college in the UK. One of the country's leading apprenticeship providers, the college is set in a campus in the heart of historic Bury St Edmunds. With ambitious plans to become a leading vocational and academic college the college serves 12,866 learners from across the region. The college aims to provide an outstanding education to every one of its students, including those with additional learning needs (ALN). It aims to put learner success at the heart of everything it does.

Since April 2018, the college has been using Cognassist to identify and support learners with ALN.

The need for a solution

The college is committed to giving all of its learners the best possible experience. Before implementing Cognassist it relied solely on individuals self-declaring any learning needs. As Lisa Parish, Head of Quality Improvement and Innovation says: 'Self-declaring is problematic as those who didn't declare would often say they were having problems 3-6 months into their apprenticeship programme. This means they didn't get off to the best start and staff often felt like they were on the back foot with learners.'

The solution in action

College staff spoke to the Vice Principal, who met with the Cognassist team and made the decision to invest in Cognassist so that it could identify learners ALN using data-driven cognitive assessment early in their course. Doing this means college staff have been able to support all learners better. As Lisa says, Cognassist has had an impact on learners and staff and the experience has been 'transformative for the team'.

'Cognassist provided us with lots of training initially and keeps in regular contact to check how we are doing and share hints and tips. Cognassist has helped raise awareness and is helping to tackle the stigma associated with ALN. Learners are enjoying and benefiting from the strategies.'

Just as importantly for both the college and its learners Lisa says:

'The college doubled its LSF income between 2017/18 and 2018/19.'

This means it's able to provide a better support service to all its learners with the help of Cognassist.