

WARWICKSHIRE COLLEGE GROUP
APPROVALS COMMITTEE VISIT
Farriers Registration Council



Established under the
Farriers (Registration) Act 1975

1-2 JULY 2024

Report of the Farriers Registration Council
Established under the Farriers (Registration) Act 1975, as amended

FARRIERS REGISTRATION COUNCIL APPROVAL COMMITTEE VISIT TO WARWICKSHIRE COLLEGE 1-2 July 2024

Introduction

1. The Farriers Registration Council (FRC) is charged under Section 11 (1) (a) and (d) of the Farriers (Registration) Act 1975 with approval of any course of training which the Council considers is designed to confer on persons completing it sufficient knowledge and skill for carrying out the shoeing of horses; and, any institution which the Council considers is properly organized and equipped for conducting the whole or any part of a course of training approved by the Council. The Council may refuse its approval or withdraw such approval previously given. The Council is further charged under Section 12 of the Act with keeping itself informed of the nature of the instruction given at institutions approved under the last foregoing section of the act to persons attending courses approved under that section.
2. So long as the institution offers a course of training in farriery, the FRC has both a right and a duty to keep itself informed of the standard of the courses and the institution and to reassure itself that the courses are of a high standard and convey the knowledge and skills required to shoe a horse. The Council carries out this duty by appointing an Approvals Committee (AC) to visit the institution as may be required, and to report to Council.
3. The Colleges and Approved Training Farriers (ATFs) together deliver the farrier standard, which outlines the required knowledge, skills and behaviours and is available on the Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education website. [Farrier / Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education](#)
4. The Assessment Plan for the End Point Assessment (EPA) is also available on the Institute for Apprenticeships & Technical Education website. [ST0172 Farrier L3 AP for Publication 20.10.23](#)
5. VetSkill is the End Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO) and carries out the end point assessment (EPA). The Colleges act as approved examination centres on behalf of VetSkill. On successful completion of the End Point Assessment the apprentice may use the post nominals QFS (Qualified to Farrier Standard).
6. The apprenticeship in farriery usually takes 42 months plus the EPA period. Apprentices are employed by an Approved Training Farrier (ATF) and have block release to one of the farriery colleges. Farriery Placement Officers (FPOs) from the colleges visit the apprentices in the workplace to ensure their welfare, check health and safety and to liaise between the ATFs and colleges in relation to the apprentices training.

7. The purpose of an Approvals Committee (AC) visit is to gather evidence that may be evaluated in order to provide assurance to both the public and the FRC that training standards are being met and arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The AC for this visit consisted of:

- a. Martin Peaty BVSc CertEP CertES (Orth) MRCVS, FRC member and Chair AC.
- b. Stephen Newman MCMi CertEd MSM FWCF.
- c. Sarah Hamlyn MSc BSc BHSI (SM).
- d. Tom Smith GradDIP ELR FWCF, FRC member and Chair FRC.

8. The AC visited Warwickshire College Group (WCG) on 1 and 2 July 2024 and were welcomed by Mark Eden, Director of Work Based Learning, Lorna Walters, Head of Department and Tim James, Senior Farriery Tutor. During the two-day visit, the AC also had discussions with the farriery lecturers, farriery placement officers (FPOs), staff dealing with library services, accommodation and pastoral care, equality and diversity, safeguarding and learning support and met with the apprentices.

9. The AC had the opportunity to talk to group 45S on block 7, which consisted of 12 apprentices, 10 male and 2 female, with an average age of 23 on the Level 3 Farriery Course and due to take the EPA in November 2024.

10. At the conclusion of the visit the AC discussed an outline of their findings including proposed recommendations to the FRC with Mark Eden, Director of Work Based Learning, Lorna Walters, Head of Department and Tim James, Senior Farriery Tutor.

11. During that visit WCG were not able to provide the 2022-2023 accounts. AC and FRC asked WCG that they be provided as soon as they were available. They were promised by the end July 2024 and subsequently by October 2024.

12. The AC became aware during the July visit that an Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) audit had been undertaken and that the outcome was pending. This was also requested.

13. Between July and November 2024 correspondence was entered into between WCG and the FRC executive and was provided to the AC. A meeting of the AC was held on 24 November 2024 to discuss outstanding matters and the correspondence.

14. The AC report on the visit of 1-2 July and the meeting of 24 November 2024 were discussed and an Emergency General Meeting (EGM) of the FRC Council on 16 December 2024. On 19 December 2024 the Further Education Commissioner Intervention Summary Report was published.

15. Following the AC visit of 1 and 2 July 2024, the AC meeting of 24 November 2024, the FRC Council EGM of 16 December 2024 and the Further Education Commissioner Intervention Summary Report of 19 December 2024 a draft report was supplied to give the WCG the opportunity to comment on or correct any matters that may have been factually incorrect.

Historical Background

16. The previous AC visit to Warwickshire College was on 17 and 18 January 2022 and the following recommendations were made to and accepted by the Council:

- a) Tutors are supported to complete the Training Assessment and Quality Assurance (TAQA) award.
- b) The College gives support to those providing the theory lectures in order to equip them to better plan, structure and document the lessons they are asked to conduct.
- c) Developmental lesson observations are started again, and an enhanced programme of lesson observations is implemented to identify the farriery tutors' individual development needs.
- d) Tutors are provided with training in teaching and ideally enrolled on a teaching qualification to help with personal development as educationalists.
- e) WCG is now providing less time at college than has previously been the case and less than Hereford, Ludlow and North Shropshire College and Myerscough College and should audit the outcomes including apprentice satisfaction with the new arrangements for reduced in person College attendance and DipWCF practical examination pass rates.
- f) Lectures from an equine veterinary surgeon with an interest in musculoskeletal practice and farriery are re-introduced as a matter of urgency.
- g) The internal quality assurer should provide more detailed feedback regarding both good practice, and areas for improvement.
- h) 1st4Sport external quality assurance report's required actions are fully implemented.
- i) In person visits by FPO re-commence in order that end of block reports and action plans can be discussed face to face, to enhance the safeguarding aspects of the visit and to enable physical checks on the premises and work equipment to be carried out.
- j) The farriery department self-assessment report and quality improvement plan (SARQIP) is reviewed to ensure that it is accurate in all respects.
- k) The College ensures all its registered farrier members of staff record sufficient farriery CPD to meet at least the FRC's recommended minimum.

- l) All apprentices are able to access any learning support required in a timely manner and that better provision is made to cover the absent learning support professional at Moreton Morrell, where farrier apprentices learning takes place.
- m) All FPOs have up to date safeguarding training.
- n) Sufficient horses are always available to enable apprentices to be challenged and stretched during practical sessions and to better prepare them for the practical part of the DipWCF examination.
- o) Warwickshire College continue to be approved by the FRC to deliver farriery apprenticeship training.

17. Each of these recommendations was followed up by the AC during its visit of 1 and 2 July and the observations on each are outlined below.

18. Recommendation a) has been implemented and all tutors have an assessment qualification such as TAQA or an alternative.

19. Recommendations b) and c) have been actioned with lesson walk throughs and weekly teaching and learning resources supplied by WCG.

20. Teaching and coaching qualifications have been obtained by all farrier tutors, or they are working towards such a qualification. One tutor has a CertEd, one tutor is enrolled on take the Certificate and Education and Training (CertET), which has replaced the CertEd, one tutor has the UK Coaching Certificate (UKCC), and other tutors have the Military Training Farrier (MTF) Examination which includes elements of teaching and coaching. (Recommendation d)

21. Recommendation e), WCG farriery apprentices continue to spend 2 weeks rather than 3 weeks on block release to college in blocks 1 to 6 compared to the previous block programme operated at the college. Twenty-six days of off the job training from the workplace was provided in lieu of 6 weeks at college. Auditing the effects of this change is not easy due to the small numbers of apprentices involved. However, working with the results of the last EPA in May 2024, 8/10 passed the written assessment and 8/10 passed the professional discussion with 5 distinctions in the professional discussion, so the online provision does not appear to be affecting the outcome of these assessments. In the practical assessments the shoeing test was passed by 5/11 and the unshod trim was passed by 4/10 apprentices.

22. In relation to recommendation f), there is no veterinary surgeon involved in formal teaching. However, the equine department regularly have their veterinary practice, Avondale Equine Vet Practice, attending on site, and the apprentices observe lameness and other cases.

23. There is no longer a need for formal internal quality assurance of assessment (recommendation g) and the external quality assurance by 1st4Sport is no longer relevant (recommendation h), following the transition from the Framework Apprenticeship to the Farriery Apprenticeship Standard.

24. In person visits by Farriery Placement Officers (FPOs) have recommenced (recommendation i).

25. Regarding recommendation j), The farriery Self-Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan (SARQIP) was looked at in detail and inaccuracies were not identified although the areas for improvement identified in the SAR were not included in the QIP and it is recommended this is corrected in the 2024 SARQIP, which was due following the end of the academic year and has been reviewed by the AC.

26. In relation to recommendation k), College based CPD on subjects such as safeguarding, health and safety, dyslexia, first aid etc are well recorded but recording of farrier specific CPD was more variable and subject to a recommendation below.

27. Learning support is readily available and commended (recommendation l).

28. FPO safeguarding training is all up to date (recommendation m).

29. Sufficient horses were made available during the visit and the apprentices were challenged and stretched (recommendation n).

Financial Viability and Probity

30. Warwickshire College Group (WCG) Annual Report and Financial Statements for The Year Ended 31 July 2022 prepared by external auditors RSM UK Audit LLP and signed in December 2022 were provided to the FRC during the visit on 1 and 2 July 2024.

31. The Annual Report and Financial Statements for The Year Ended 31 July 2023 were not available nearly 12 months after the year end. The AC recommended that the annual report and financial statements for 2023 were sent to the FRC as soon as they became available.

32. WCG were subject to an Education Skills and Funding Agency (ESFA) audit and anomalies had been identified at the time of the visit on 1-2 July 2024. The AC asked that the ESFA audit, which identified these anomalies, should be forwarded to the FRC; data entry was not meeting current ESFA rules, but AC was assured this did not relate to farriery. The AC were told at their visit that WCG Management Information Services (MIS) staff turnover and retention issues have contributed to this shortcoming. WCG had asked the ESFA for, and had been granted, an

extension until the end of July 2024 and FRC have yet to receive a completed ESFA audit.

33. In 2022 total reserves were £54,448,000, total income £48,821,000 and total expenditure £51,413,000 resulting in a deficit of £2,592,000.

34. The College was certified as a going concern in 2022 and it was confirmed that it complied with the Education and Skills Funding Agency's (ESFA) requirements and its own Statement of Corporate Governance and Internal Control and Statement of Regularity, Propriety and Compliance. As noted at point 27 as above, the 2023 report is not yet available.

35. The Director of Work Based Learning outlined verbally to the AC that income to the farrier department is above target but that costs have increased significantly, and there was significant concern about the current levels of farriery apprenticeship funding. The WCG board had committed to two farriery apprentice intakes for 2025. The outcome of the application for an increase in farrier apprenticeship funding from government was eagerly awaited and a significant increase in this funding has now been agreed.

36. The WCG Annual Report and Accounts for 2022 to 2023 were approved and signed off on 22 October 2024 and were provided to the FRC and the AC.

37. Concerns outlined in the WCG Report and Accounts for 2022 to 2023 included:

- a. the financial health grading was "inadequate".
- b. there was a claw back risk that has yet to be resolved with the ESFA.
- c. WCG was in breach of its banking terms with Lloyds Bank PLC. The Annual Report and Accounts stated that the Governors were working to resolve this.

38. The WCG Annual Report and Accounts for 2022 to 2023 also note that:

- a. WCG is a "going concern" although this is contingent on receiving further funding or capital receipts- the Malvern Hills site has been closed since lockdown in 2020 and is currently being marketed for sale.
- b. There was a deficit of £1,647,000 on a turnover of £52,841,000 equating to 3.12%.
- c. There were unrestricted reserves of £59,965,000 on the balance sheet.
- d. The Governors of WCG asked the Further Education Commissioners to undertake a financial health check of the College in July 2024 and The Department for Education (DfE) issued an Intervention Financial Health Notice to Improve (Ntl) on 28 Sept 2024. The Board is developing a Single Improvement Plan.

39. The AC noted that financial problems had occurred and that a Single Improvement Plan, which the Ntl stated should include specific, measurable,

achievable, realistic, and timely (SMART) actions in respect of staff savings and a review of curriculum areas, was being worked on. WCG has been asked to provide a Costed Business Plan in respect of the farriery faculty and provision of the Standard to give the FRC assurance on the financial stability.

40. In terms of probity and governance the AC noted that:

- a. The Governors of WCG had self-referred to the Further Education Commissioners.
- b. The Principal, Deputy Principal and Chief Finance Officer responsible during the 2022-2023 accounting period have left WCG and that a new Principal, Sara-Jane Watkins, was in place.
- c. The Department for Education has not used its statutory powers of intervention as set out in section 56A of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992.
- d. The new Principal had given assurances to the FRC that the SIP and other requirements of the Ntl were being complied with.
- e. A turnaround director has been appointed.

41. The AC wanted assurance that the financial problems being experienced by WCG were not impacting investment in health and safety in the farriery department. The FRC has enquired of WCG farriery department in relation to findings during its visit on 1 and 2 July 2024 in relation to the maintenance of anvils and gas forges and the installation of a new the extraction flue in the forge. FRC has been told that the maintenance and installation had been completed.

42. The FE Commissioner Intervention Assessment Summary Report: Warwickshire College Group (WCG) was published on 19 December 2024 three days after the EGM of 16 December 2024. WCG was placed in Supervise Status and the FE Commissioner will visit again in March 2025. The report was positive in relation to the start made by the new principal and outlined that support from ESFA has been agreed in order to maintain the solvency of WCG.

43. The FRC will keep itself apprised of further developments including any report published by the FE Commissioner in March, the Annual Report and Accounts 2023-2024 and progress with the Ntl.

Teaching and Learning

44. Members of the AC observed the teaching of theory during revision sessions and of practical instruction in trimming, shoe making, fitting, shoeing and finishing.

45. Some good practice was observed with the purpose of revision sessions clearly explained and related to the requirements of the EPA. The apprentices were engaged and confident to ask questions. The farriery tutors communicated well, classroom control was good and explanations clear and showed evident knowledge of the subject. Those apprentices who offered information showed good knowledge and understanding. Useful reference was made to revision techniques and the use of key words in a mind map as a tool. At other times the sessions were dominated

by a few more vocal apprentices and checks on learning did not involve all the apprentices. A wider range of teaching, learning and assessment methods could have been used with more use made of visual aids or other technologies. The AC will wish to see evidence of use of a wider range of methods at its next visit. (Recommendation 5i).

46. The layout of the classrooms would have benefited from attention to ensure that all apprentices had a clear view of the white board and the screen. The AC will wish to see evidence of improved layout at its next visit. (Recommendation 5i).

47. Observations of teaching take place on a regular basis and are carried out by a team of Teaching and Learning Improvement (TLI) staff. The observers have access to the apprentices' personalised learning grids that identify individual needs and the strategies to support these needs. The TLI staff concluded that lessons are well planned, that questioning was good and that apprentices were focussed and engaged throughout the sessions. The areas for improvement included the importance of correct spelling and increased use of nominated questions to ensure that all apprentices are providing feedback and that the tutor is able to check understanding. These findings reflected those of the AC.

48. The Head of Work Based Learning (Land Based incl. Farriery) carries out walk-through observations of lessons (management lesson visits) which are short observations carried out by one of the management team. Judgements are made about attitude and behaviour, pedagogical approach, checks on learning and employability skills. Generally, these are deemed effective. Areas for improvement identified included ensuring that session aims are written out and visible to all, better use of questions to check understanding and structuring practical sessions to enable one to one feedback, which mirrored the observations of the AC. The AC will wish to see evidence of areas for improvement having been put into effect at its next visit. (Recommendation 5i).

49. It is not clear how the findings from these observations are collated and used to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. The AC recommend that the lesson observations are used to produce an effective method of sharing good practice, and the development of clear action plans for improvement of teaching and learning. The AC will wish to see evidence of lesson observations and action plans for improvement having been put into effect at its next visit. (Recommendation 5i)

50. The document titled Master Template 683E Farrier 2023/24 requires updating to reflect the fact that the apprentices no longer take the Diploma but rather the EPA. It currently refers to "Diploma Shoeing" and "Diploma Style Professional Discussions." The Scheme of Work (SOW) documents require updating to include the VetSkill website instead of the Worshipful Company of Farriers (WCF) website as the former are currently the only EPAO <https://www.vetskill.com/epas/p/level-farrier3> The AC will wish to see that references relate to the extant EPAO and do not include references to "Diploma ...(etc)" at its next visit. (Recommendation 5e).

51. The Practical Training Plan document for apprentices refers to each student undertaking an exam of the WCF and signposts them to the WCF website. It should reference the EPA and the current EPAO website above. The AC will wish to see

that references relate to the extant EPAO and its website at its next visit. (Recommendation 5e).

52. References to the WCF website should be removed as the information it contains, including “the WCF will be known as the EPA awarding organisation that delivered the final assessment” and “On successful completion of the End Point Assessment the apprentice will receive professional recognition by way of the award of the Diploma of The Worshipful Company of Farriers” are factually wrong and misleading. The links provided in these College documents to the Farrier Apprenticeship Standard and the Farrier Assessment Plan are not to the up-to-date versions of those documents and should be updated. The AC will wish to see that references relate to the extant EPAO and do not include references to the previous EPAO or “Diploma ...” at its next visit. (Recommendation 5e).

53. An e-portfolio is in place and OneFile is used for farriery.

54. External partner institutions contributing to the farriery program include the FRC with presentations from the Registrar, VetSkill in relation to the EPA, HoofBeat with a demonstration by J Nunn, Eastlake & Beachell on insurance, the Avondale Equine Vet Practice and Ash Sims Finance/General Business Advisors on setting up a business.

55. Formal teaching by a veterinary surgeon is not in place on the farriery course but the Equine Department at the College is next to the Farriery Department and has frequent visits from Avondale Equine Vet Practice, and farriery apprentices are encouraged to observe cases and lameness cases in particular. One of the three examiners for the EPA will be a veterinary examiner. The veterinary examiner is responsible for one third of the professional discussion; the AC noted that very good results including several distinctions were obtained in this assessment in the May 2024 EPA.

56. End of block reports and action plans are provided to the ATF employer, FPO and apprentice. Reports inform the areas to focus on prior to the next college block. These link to reviews and identification of areas for improvement.

57. Google Classroom was used during the COVID pandemic, and its use has been further developed to provide teaching material for the apprentices to access remotely. Lectures, the farriery handbook, quizzes, video demonstrations and other learning materials are available.

58. Horse handling is taught and safety and risk management in this area been assessed.

Continuity of Apprentices in Training

59. The College is aware of the need for apprentices to be employed to continue as an apprentice in training, lawfully carry out farriery and be eligible for public funding. Attention to detail in production of the farriery department meeting minutes is required so that they correctly identify the dates of the meetings, those present and those absent and the actions which result from meetings, along with follow up on

actions resulting from previous meetings. The AC will wish to see farriery department meeting minutes at its next visit. (Recommendation 5f).

60. The College check on employment status at the start of the apprenticeship and throughout. The Apprenticeship Service portal requires information on the employing ATF training provider, the College and the apprentice and requires details on PAYE.

61. The FPOs and College will help to resolve issues between ATFs and apprentices where possible and facilitate changes of ATF when required.

62. When an apprentice leaves their ATF and goes straight into employment with another ATF not already affiliated with the College, the normal procedure will start to ensure that the workplace and ATF meet all the necessary requirements.

63. When an apprentice returns after a break in learning for any substantial amount of time, the college will assess the apprentice and re-introduce them into a stage of the apprenticeship that is found to be most appropriate.

Quality Assurance and Compliance

64. The overall pass rates for the Autumn 2023 EPA were 5/8 passes with 4 of those passing gaining distinctions.

65. At the time of the visit to WCG farrier college, in the most recent EPA in May 2024, 8/10 passed the written assessment and 8/10 passed the professional discussion with 5 distinctions in the professional discussion. In the practical assessments, the shoeing test was passed by 5/11 and the unshod trim was passed by 4/10 apprentices. The number of apprentices taking these assessments is small which makes it difficult to draw any definitive conclusions from the results. However, the trend in the May EPA was for higher pass rates in the written and professional discussion elements, which have mainly theory elements, and lower pass rates in the two practical assessments, the unshod trim and shoeing test. In 2021 the FRC asked Warwickshire College to monitor their results following the removal of 6 weeks from the block release from work and replacement by remote online teaching. In view of the May 24 results and the obvious difficulty in providing practical instruction online the AC has recommended the College look at the provision of online practical training and whether the online training it provides might be used to provide more theory training, leaving more time available at college for practical training. WCG is asked to provide an analysis of the reduction in time spent in college by apprentices, identifying what effect this may have on teaching and learning of practical skills and whether there may be any correlation with lower levels of attainment at assessment in respect of practical skills relative to theoretical knowledge (Recommendation 5k). In addition, the AC will wish to see evidence that logging of 'off the job training' by apprentices is checked to ensure it is completed in normal working hours and complies with ESFA rules at its next visit. (Recommendation 5c)

66. The self-assessment report and quality improvement plans (SARQIPs) are prepared at the end of each academic year; the 2024 SARQIP has been scrutinised by the AC.

67. The farriery team produce an annual self-assessment report (SAR) and quality improvement plan (QUIP) at the end of the academic year. This feeds in the departmental SAR. The 2022-23 SAR did not include any achievement data such as examination / assessment pass rates. It was not always clear how the areas for improvement in the SAR informed the action points in the QUIP.

68. The 2023 QUIP has not been updated to confirm which actions had been completed and which are outstanding. From the evidence seen by the AC the QUIP is not currently being used effectively as a management tool to facilitate a cycle of improvement.

69. The 2024 SARQIP addressed many of the issues identified in the 2023 document with the many areas for improvement identified in the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) having an action identified in the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).

70. Initialism is used widely in the document, BKSB, ATF, RPL and ESFA in just paragraph 1, and it would be good practice and helpful if the abbreviation was written in full and the initials included in brackets at least on the first time the term is used in order to allow all to understand the document more easily.

71. The 2024 SAR identifies in paragraph 1 that an area for improvement is that "Further support and guidance for Apprentices when completing their Learning Journal on OneFile as per ESFA guidelines." This follows the AC's observations in paragraph 53 above and recommendation 5c of the Summary and Recommendations, which was fed back at the end of the AC visit, and is included as item 8 in the 2024 QIP

72. Recommendation 5d in the Summary and Recommendations was in relation to regular checks and maintenance of anvils and gas forges and the fitting of the replacement extraction flue. This was not identified as an area for improvement in the SAR but was included as action point 1 in the QIP

73. There has been progress in the 2024 SARQIP in relation to recommendations 5f,5g and 5h of the Summary and Recommendations below, which were fed back at the end of the AC visit.

74. OFQUAL have recently visited WCG to look at accommodation and pastoral care and found the provision to be GOOD.

Staff

75. The following staff were in place in the farriery department and the College during the visit on 1 and 2 July 2024:

- | | | |
|----|---------------|---|
| a. | Mark Eden | Apprenticeships Director (Work Based Learning) |
| b. | Lorna Walters | Head of Work Based Learning (Land Based incl. Farriery) |
| c. | Lisa Trill | Administrator Work Based Learning-Land Based |
| d. | Tim James | Senior Farriery Tutor DipWCF UKCC Level 2 Full time |
| e. | Ben Hart | Farriery Tutor DipWCF TAQA 2 days per week |

f.	Martin Reed	Farriery Tutor DipWCF CTLLS A1 1 day per week
g.	Connor Morrison	Farriery Tutor DipWCF TAQA 2 days per week
h.	Alex Mercer	Farriery Tutor AWCF 1 day per week.
i.	Jordan Priestley	Farriery Tutor DipWCF TAQA 2 days per week
j.	Mark Rose	Farriery Placement Officer AWCF Suffolk & Norfolk
k.	Ben Hart	Farriery Placement Officer DipWCF Midlands & South
l.	Chris McCabe	Farriery Placement Officer AWCF MTF Midlands & North
m.	Vicky Hewlett	Learning Support Officer
n.	Katherine Skudra	Safeguarding Officer
o.	Sangita Emmett	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
p.	Paul Marsh	Residential Warden

76. All farriery tutors have appropriate professional qualifications and assessment qualifications.

77. All farriery staff have or are working towards teaching or coaching qualifications.

78. The FPOs were all interviewed either in person or by telephone. All were enthusiastic about their roles and felt supported in their roles. A suite of appropriate training, which was regularly refreshed, was provided by the college.

79. Farriery tutors are all recording college required courses and some are recording significantly in excess of the minimum farrier Continuing Professional Development (CPD) required by the FRC; others are not recording the recommended minimum farrier CPD. The AC recommend that the college ensures its registered farrier members of staff record sufficient CPD on the college records so that the college can be certain they are meeting the colleges requirements. Farriery department staff who may be registered farriers shall be subject to two discrete CPD regimes; while some learning and developmental activities may meet the requirements of both regimes, care should be taken to avoid confusing the requirements. (Recommendation 5j).

Resources

80. Tutors and apprentices both reported good availability of horses, which were said to be well behaved. College horses are reliably available, well behaved and have good feet and are used for EPA practical assessments. Outside horses are brought in to be trimmed and shod by the apprentices in order to increase the numbers of horses and ponies available for training and formative assessments.

81. Staff to apprentice ratios for practical lessons met requirements: they were observed to be no greater than 1:4 for shoeing horses and 1:8 for shoemaking. This required three tutors to be available for shoeing with the 12 apprentices in group 45S on block 7 seen during this visit, and one of the employed FPOs was brought in to meet the requirement during the AC visit.

82. The apprentices reported that stocks of steel in appropriate sections were always available.

83. The working environment is kept clean and tidy in the forge and shoeing areas.

84. First aid kits and eyewashes were available.

85. Adequate teaching and demonstration rooms were available.

86. Equipment such as anvils are key to effective training delivery; the AC will wish to see that regular maintenance checks and fault reporting are being carried out in the forge area, and actions required carried out without delay at its next visit. (Recommendation 5d)

87. The gas fires have doors that are warped, and the fire linings were cracked. Gas fire maintenance was identified at the farrier meeting on 21 February 2024 but has not yet been actioned, but the AC was assured it is planned in the near future. The AC will wish to see evidence that effective maintenance to the gas fires has been carried out at its next visit. (Recommendation 5d).

88. The coke forge extraction flue parts have been commissioned, manufactured and delivered but not yet fitted in the COVE forge; this is over a year after its use had to be discontinued. The AC will wish to see evidence that extraction flue parts have been fitted and are effective at its next visit. (Recommendation 5d).

89. The library is set in a converted indoor riding school and provides a good size, well-lit and very pleasant study area. All the required textbooks were available along with a selection of journals.

90. Many of the textbooks and journals were available as e-books but during discussions with the apprentices it became clear that the use of the library remotely is infrequent in contrast with frequent use of materials on Google Classroom.

91. Many copies of standard textbooks, such as Adams and Stashak's Lameness in Horses, were two editions out of date. The AC will wish to see that textbooks available to apprentices are the up-to-date editions. (Recommendation 5l).

Student Welfare

92. Moreton Morrell has a nurse available who can triage any health concerns and the College has a car to transport students to the GP surgery or A&E should the need arise.

93. A counselling service is available at the Moreton Morrell campus.

94. The College Safeguarding Policy was made available to the AC. The AC met with Katherine Skudra the Safeguarding Officer.

95. Katherine is involved in face-to-face training for the Farriery Placement Officers (FPOs). The last face to face session was in April 2023. All staff have up to date safeguarding training, which is refreshed online every 3 years with managers ensuring all staff comply.

96. FPOs are given guidance on how to have difficult conversations with ATFs and apprentices in the workplace. There is a good understanding of the types of issue faced by the apprentices in the workplace.

97. Apprentices are given a reminder about how to access support, in particular around mental health issues, at the beginning of every block.

98. Katherine explained in some depth how welfare and safeguarding was carried out at the College level and how that related to farriery apprentices. College wide there has been an increase in uptake by young men which is relevant to farriery, as the majority of apprentices are male.

99. Farriery apprentices can raise any concerns with FPOs, farriery tutors or anyone else in the College. Staff enter concerns online using My Concern. Any reports are picked up and triaged for appropriate action.

100. There will be an online reporting system for apprentices to use from next year with QR codes to facilitate access from mobile phones.

101. The Prevent policy was made available to the AC. Separate Prevent training is provided for recognising extremism and preventing terrorism. Prevent posters were displayed widely around the College.

102. The FPOs, in common with others at WCG conducting apprentice's work-based learning progress reviews, are required to select from a panel of 7 health and safety questions, 6 equality and diversity questions and 6 safeguarding and Prevent monitoring questions at each visit and record the answers and discussion with the apprentice.

103. The AC met with Paul Marsh, the Residential Warden. Residential wardens play an important role especially in those under 18 years of age. Accommodation is single sex for under 18's and those under 18 are segregated from those over 18. There is a curfew of 10.30 for those under 18 on site. They are required to electronically check into their block with a fob and spot checks are carried out. There are phones in each block to contact the wardens who live on site. Student ID is required to use the bar facilities.

104. There is a refectory on site, but this was not open during the AC's visit. The farriery apprentices had paid for catered accommodation so arrangements to refund were immediately made and cooking facilities in another accommodation block made available as their block had only basic catering facilities with a fridge, freezer, microwave, kettle and toaster.

105. The Work Based Learning (WBL) Scheme of Work for Farriery is the title of the farriery handbook. The document outlines in some detail the behaviours and resources required, the gateway and how the subject will be assessed as well as equality and diversity and British values and employability skills including personal development, social skills and enterprise / creative skills.

106. The Student Behaviour Policy and the Apprenticeship Induction Handbook were provided to the AC.

Equality Diversity and Inclusion

107. The AC met with Sangita Emmett who works to ensure Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are integrated into college activities.

108. The College E, D & I policy was made available to the AC. Two additional documents, Equality, Diversity & British Values Guide for Teaching and Training Staff and a Diversity Calendar, are produced by Warwickshire College Group and were made available to the AC.

109. All new staff have to take an online Equality and Diversity training module and refresher training every three years. There is a tutorial programme for all full-time students and the farriery tutors are made aware of the programme of Equality & Diversity events, which are on the Diversity Calendar.

110. For farriery, work-based learning progress reviews are scheduled every 10 weeks to ensure that the requirement for them to be carried out at least every 12 weeks is always met; even in the event of holidays or medical absence by those involved. Equality, diversity and inclusion is therefore revisited on a regular basis by the asking of questions by the FPO's during the visits.

111. The AC met with Vicky Hewlett from Learning Support who works at the Morton Morrell site where the farriery department is based.

112. Examination access requirements and supporting evidence are communicated to the examination's office, who pass these on to the EPAO.

113. Tailored support is available for those apprentices with disclosed diagnoses.

114. There are 65 farriery apprentices currently enrolled at the College and 21 (32%) have been identified as requiring support. The Farriery Placement Officers (FPOs) are made aware of any additional learning support an apprentice may have indicated they are content to share.

115. Read and Write, a Google Chrome extension is available on the intranet to give specific support to those with dyslexia and is made available on the computers and mobile devices of those who require it.

116. Personalised Learning Grids (PLGs) are used to identify student learning requirements and strategies used to optimise learning, including reasonable adjustments for assessments, for each apprentice. These are based on disclosure and testing and shared with all staff involved with the learner for a range of special educational needs (SEN) with dyslexia, autism and attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) being most common.

117. The College follow the Joint Council Qualifications (JCQ) policy for apprentices who do not have English as their first language. According to the JCQ if a learner

has no previous knowledge of English and has been in country for less than 3 years then a bilingual dictionary and 10% additional time are available for examinations. Where learners have been in country for more than 3 years, they can have a bilingual dictionary but no additional time unless they can show they have difficulties with their own language. The college is asked to note that the entry standard required for the farriery profession is GCSE English at grade C or above, or IELTS level 6. This requirement is to be applied in every case. (Recommendation 5n).

Approved Training Farriers (ATFs) (Employers)

118. The College provided a list of all the ATFs currently working with them. The list detailed the apprentice employed by the ATF and the group the apprentice was in.

119. Warwickshire College organise an annual face to face day course for their ATFs, which increases engagement and provides training and CPD opportunities and is commended.

120. The College ensures appropriate insurance is in place and carries out a range of health and safety checks when an apprentice starts with an ATF. An employment contract must always be in place.

121. Regular monitoring visits are carried out at the same time as the work-based learning progress reviews by the FPOs. Evidence of these was seen by the AC.

122. Teaching and Learning Assessment Plans (TLAPs) act as a check on learning and progress with a final TLAP informing the Gateway advice to the employing ATF, although this is not always followed by the ATF who has the final decision on whether the apprentice passes the Gateway and takes the EPA. The ATF is responsible for any re-sit or re-take fees payable to the EPAO should the apprentice not be successful in the EPA at the first time of asking.

123. End of block reports and action plans are shared between apprentices, ATFs and FPOs. Training concerns identified during college attendance are discussed with ATFs by farriery tutors and FPOs.

124. The Head of Work Based Learning (Land Based) has previously indicated that they declined to work with some ATFs and provided examples of reasons for taking this action.

Relationship with the FRC

125. The FRC requested information for Warwickshire College approval visit by letter to the Director of Work Based Learning on 24 April 2024. The evidential requirements are outlined in the Procedures for Approvals which were attached to the letter.

126. Documentation was requested by 30 May 2024 but was not received until 26 June 2024, just two working days prior to the visit. Inevitably this hampered preparation for the visit. It is recommended that information and evidence requested

from the regulator of the farrier profession, the FRC, including in relation to approvals matters, are provided on time. (Recommendation 5m).

127. The College has a data sharing agreement (DSA) with the FRC.

128. The College is required to enrol apprentices with the FRC at the commencement of the apprenticeship in order that the apprentice may practise farriery lawfully while in training and is also required to notify the FRC of any changes affecting ATFs and Apprentices. These may include ATFs who the training provider are no longer content to work with, and apprentices who may have left training, re-joined training or moved from one employer to another. Such notifications are required in a weekly update, which are provided to the FRC each Friday.

129. To allow successful apprentices to register as quickly as possible following qualification and avoid practicing farriery illegally by virtue of no longer being apprentices but not having registered with the FRC, training providers are asked to ensure that on arrival at college for the EPA block (8), apprentices complete application for registration forms and return them to the college staff for posting to the FRC to avoid delays. This enables the FRC to check applications while the apprentices are conducting the EPA block so that those that are successful can contact the Council to make payment of the registration fee and join the register. Warwickshire College have managed this process well.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Farriers Registration Council (FRC) Approvals Committee (AC) visited Warwickshire College on 1-2 July 2024 and met on 24 November 2024 to consider the continued suitability of the College to deliver Farrier Apprenticeship training. These matters were discussed at the EGM of the FRC Council on 16 December 2024.
2. During its visit on 1 and 2 July 2024, the AC was made welcome and was able to access the staff, students, facilities and the records required to make an assessment in relation to the FRC Procedures for Approvals which includes, in relation to this visit, the procedures for the Approval of Courses of Training and Institutions under Section 11(1) (a) and (d) of the Farriers Registration Act 1975.
3. The recommendations made following the visit in 2022 have received attention although further action is still required in relation to some of these areas some two years later. These are as outlined in the section on Historical Background (at 16-29 above).
4. The AC noted several areas to be commended:
 - a. Good provision for learning support is available; including Read and Write, a Google Chrome extension, which is especially useful for those with dyslexia.
 - b. Thorough processes for safeguarding of apprentices were in place.

- c. Warwickshire College organise an annual face to face day course for their ATFs, which increases engagement and provides training and CPD opportunities.
- d. Motivated and well briefed FPOs carry out 10-weekly visit which are well documented on OneFile.
- e. Innovative use is made of Teaching and Learning Assessment Plans (TLAPs) and act as a check on learning and progress with a final TLAP informing the Gateway advice to the employing ATF.
- f. There was good standard of accommodation and pastoral care provided at the Moreton Morrell campus.
- g. The library is housed in a converted indoor riding school and provides an attractive workspace with all texts required for the farriery apprentices available. A good range of journals were also available and some of the texts were available as e-books enabling remote access.

5. Following its visit to Warwickshire College on 1 and 2 July 2024 and meeting on 24 November 2024 and the EGM of FRC Council on 16 December 2024 it was recommended that:

- a. The Annual Report and Accounts 2023 to 2024 and any further FE Commissioners reports are provided as soon as they are available and that progress following the Ntl is monitored. A Costed Business Plan is to be provided by 4/4/25.
- b. Logging of 'off the job training' by the apprentices is checked to ensure it is completed in normal working hours and complies with ESFA rules.
- c. Equipment such as anvils is key to effective training delivery; the AC will wish to see that regular maintenance checks and fault reporting are being carried out in the forge area and actions required carried out without delay, on its next visit. The AC will wish to see evidence that effective maintenance to the gas fires has been carried out, and the AC will also wish to see evidence that extraction flue parts have been fitted and are effective, both at its next visit.
- d. Documentation including the Master Template 683E Farrier, Scheme of Work, and Training Plan are updated to reflect the fact there has been an EPA since the beginning of 2023. References to the DipWCF as the EPA, to "Diploma Shoeing", "Diploma Style Professional Discussions," should be updated and correct and links to the current EPA organisation rather than the previous one provided. The AC will wish to see that references relate to the extant EPAO and do not include references to "Diploma ...(etc)" at its next visit.
- e. Attention to detail in production of the farriery meeting minutes is required so that they correctly identify the dates of the meetings, those present and those absent and the actions which result from meetings, along with follow up on actions resulting from previous meetings.
- f. The 2024 Self-Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan (SARQUIP) be provided to the FRC as soon as it is completed. The SAR includes achievement data and the End Point Assessment (EPA) results. The QUIP includes the areas for improvement identified in the SAR.
- g. The AC recommend that the QUIP is used more effectively to ensure that identified improvements are actioned.
- h. The lesson observations are used to produce an effective method of sharing good practice, and the development of a clear action plan for improvement of

teaching and learning. The AC will wish to see evidence of use of a wider range of methods, and see evidence of improved layout, at its next visit. The AC will wish to see evidence of areas for improvement having been put into effect and see evidence of lesson observations and action plans for improvement having been put into effect at its next visit.

- i. Warwickshire College ensures its registered farrier members of staff record sufficient CPD on the College records so that the College can be certain they are meeting the college's requirements. Farriery department staff who may be registered farriers shall be subject to two discrete CPD regimes; while some learning and developmental activities may meet the requirements of both regimes, care should be taken to avoid confusing the requirements.
- j. Warwickshire College review the provision of online practical training in view of the results of the May 2024 practical assessments. WCG is asked to provide an analysis of the reduction in time spent in college by apprentices, what affect this may have on teaching and learning of practical skills and whether there may be any correlation with lower levels of attainment at assessment in respect of practical skills relative to theoretical knowledge.
- k. Up to date copies of standard textbooks, such as Adams and Stashak's Lameness in Horses are made available to ensure apprentices have access to the most up to date information.
- l. Information and evidence requested from the regulator of the farrier profession, the FRC, including in relation to approvals matters, are provided promptly.
- m. The college is asked to note that the entry standard required for the farriery profession is GCSE English at grade C or above, or IELTS level 6. This requirement is to be applied in every case.
- n. WCG at Morton Morrell continue to be approved by the FRC to deliver farriery apprenticeship training for two years until 2026 in accordance with FRC policy. The FRC Policy for Approvals also directs that revisits may be carried when concerns arise. The purpose of any re-visit would be to consider the progress in addressing the recommendations above made by Council and to assess the quality of provision of farriery training in the light of measures set out by the Further Education Commissioners and Place Based Team in the Ntl and Intervention Summary Report and/or the Costed Business Plan.