

Browne Jacobson advises Apiary Capital on Armstrong Learning investment

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Established in 2002 by Adrian Armstrong, Armstrong Learning delivers specialist education and training in the creative industries through the Access Creative College and apprenticeship programmes through a recently-established joint-venture partnership with the National College of Creative Industries ("NCCI").

Established in 1992, Access Creative College is a leading independent education provider delivering further and higher education courses and career-focused training for 16-19 year olds in computing, games, media, music and events. Boasting some of the UK's leading music artists as alumni including Rita Ora, Jess Glynne, and the company's patron Ed Sheeran, Access Creative College delivers vocational education in the creative industries to over 3,000 learners at campuses in London, Birmingham, Manchester, Bristol, York, Lincoln, Norwich and other locations with partnership providers.

Apiary Capital is a lower mid-market private equity house that invests in the education, healthcare, business and technology sectors. This is the fifth investment from its inaugural fund which closed at £200 million in 2018.

The Browne Jacobson team was led by private equity partner Gareth Davies, supported by senior associates Kirk Glenn and Ryan Brown and associate Dan Thomas. Clearwater International advised the vendors.

Jason Beaumont, CEO of Armstrong Learning, said: *"The investment from Apiary is tremendously exciting for the business. The recently announced joint venture with NCCI means the group now offers learners the full range of further education options with courses at Levels 2, 3 and 4 plus T-Levels and apprenticeships, and we will now be able to develop and expand our provision. We're passionate about ensuring our learners are prepared for their creative careers in this exciting, growing sector."*

Mark Salter, Managing Partner at Apiary Capital, commented: *"We are delighted to be supporting Jason, Adrian and the team at Armstrong Learning with their ambitious growth plans. Access Creative College has established a great reputation in the further education sector and Jason and Adrian's passion and vision for the business are really exciting - the UK has a thriving creative industries workforce with global recognition and it's a highly attractive market that will see growing demand for well-educated young people."*

Browne Jacobson's **Gareth Davies**, added: *"We are delighted to have advised Apiary Capital on this important strategic investment within their wider education sector portfolio. Their investment in Armstrong Learning alongside their considerable experience in the education sector will help to broaden Access Creative College's existing provision and reach which is key to its vision of becoming the number one choice for creative training in the UK."*

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