

# **NLT Training Services Ltd**

## **Reinspection monitoring visit report**

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**Unique reference number:** 53535

**Name of lead inspector:** Tim Hanson HMI

**Last day of inspection:** 12 January 2011

**Type of provider:** Independent learning provider

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## REINSPECTION MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

### Context and focus of visit

NLT Training Services (NLT) is a registered charity providing a range of work-based learning programmes for adults and young people. Operating in Chesterfield and Scunthorpe, NLT employs 58 members of staff and currently has 343 learners.

Contracting with the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and the Young Peoples Learning Agency (YPLA), NLT provides apprenticeships, advanced apprenticeships and national vocational qualifications (NVQ) at levels 1, 2 and 3. A Skills for Life programme provides level one qualifications. The company also provides a foundation learning programme, a young apprenticeships programme and commercial training.

NLT was inspected previously in May 2010. Overall effectiveness was judged to be inadequate as were capacity to improve, outcomes for learners, leadership and management and the business administration subject area. Quality of provision and the engineering and warehousing and distribution subject areas were judged to be satisfactory as were the contributory areas of safeguarding and equality and diversity. This reinspection monitoring visit reports on the mandatory themes of outcomes for learners and self-assessment and improvement planning. In addition inspectors evaluated progress made in the development of management strategies and management information systems and the development of improved learner review and feedback gathering initiatives.

### Themes

#### Self-assessment and improvement planning

**What progress has NLT made in improving the effectiveness of the self-assessment and quality improvement processes?**      **Reasonable progress**

At the previous inspection, NLT's capacity to improve and the self-assessment process were judged to be inadequate. Highly effective actions have been taken to address areas for improvement identified by inspectors. Quality improvement processes are now an integral part of the overall performance management system with the quality improvement plan acting as a key tool for improvement. Improved communication throughout NLT leads to better recording of issues and the setting of more detailed and measurable targets to ensure improvements take place rapidly and are monitored more effectively. Performance data are used to inform the quality improvement plan and are successfully identifying any emerging trends and required actions.

Self-assessment is now fully inclusive with raised levels of staff awareness and involvement. Staff training days based on self assessment and quality improvement are well received by staff. All staff meetings involve monitoring and updating of the

quality improvement plan. A quality cycle has yet to be implemented by the organisation and currently production of the self-assessment report is retrospective. At the time of inspection the report lacks cohesion and although accurate in identifying key issues, it is not systematically compiled.

### **Outcomes for learners**

#### **How much progress has NLT made to improve the overall and planned outcomes for learners? Reasonable progress**

Since the previous inspection, NLT has refocused and now places a higher emphasis on monitoring and improving learner progress and the quality of the learner journey. Outcomes for learners generally show an improving trend. Overall success and completion rates for apprentices in 2009/10 have improved and are 7% above the national average. However, whilst the comparative outcome rates for the smaller number of advanced apprentices has also improved it remains significantly below the national average. Success rates for business administration learners are improving and are good for apprentice programmes. However, too few advanced apprentices complete their programme by the planned end date.

The proportion of level 2 Train to Gain learners both succeeding and completing their programme within the allotted time has improved significantly since the previous inspection. However, rates remain well below national averages. Comparative rates for the smaller number of Train to Gain learners at level 3 have risen but are significantly below the national average. Success rates for the small number of learners following Skills for Life programmes in 2009/10 were low and significantly below the previous year's rate. The proportion of learners completing their programme by the planned end date has declined.

### **Quality of provision**

#### **What progress has NLT made to improve the effectiveness of assessment planning and the learner progress review process? Reasonable progress**

Previous inspection findings identified that learner progress reviews and assessment planning were in some cases weak and not well planned. Revised learner review processes and paperwork have resulted in a more refined and focused system. Staff training has taken place to improve target setting for learners. Learners are now fully aware of the tasks required for completion between visits and the impact on their progress. At the previous inspection the promotion of equality and diversity and health and safety at learner progress reviews was not being carried out effectively. Staff training and revision to the progress review paper work allow for this now to take place and be formally recorded.

Assessment is now focused and well planned in line with the learners' progress reviews and reports. Strategies for assessment are reviewed and staff are given key learner progress performance targets to ensure assessment is timely and rigorous. Internal verification processes now play a key part in assuring the quality of the assessment and review process through regular monitoring and observation. Learner tracking systems are informed through the review process, however management information systems are not yet being used to their full potential for overall programme management purposes.

### **Leadership and management**

**How much progress has been made to make better use of feedback for quality improvement purposes?**

**Reasonable  
progress**

At the previous inspection a lack of opportunities to gather the views of learners through learner representatives was identified and a recently introduced system for gathering a range of feedback for programme improvement was in place but not fully established. Feedback is now gathered regularly from employers, learners and staff. Good examples of improvements following analysis of feedback were identified by inspectors. Examples include improvements to resources and premises and better links with employers. Recently introduced learner forums and employee forums are influencing improvements and are highly valued by both staff and learners. However, some opportunities are missed to gather regular on-programme feedback from learners on the longer advanced apprenticeship programmes and not all programmes are currently involved in the learner forums.

Several staff are involved in benchmarking activities with similar providers nationally and feedback from this good practice initiative is also influencing programme improvements. NLT are fully committed to the recently formed national organisation that represents the sector and use the networking opportunities this gives to share and gain good practice.

**What progress has been made to improve management information systems and strategies?**

**Reasonable  
progress**

Since the previous inspection, business planning has improved and now uses a suitable range of data to set targets that are appropriately detailed. The plan reflects the aim of the provider in providing a high quality learning experience. In addition, NLT has carried out organisational restructuring which includes a clarification of individual roles and responsibilities that better supports the monitoring of individual training contracts. NLT has implemented a range of actions that has improved its management information systems. Managers now have access to, and use, an adequate range of relevant and timely reports for monitoring purposes.

Recognition that the comprehensive capture and use of learner data and targets can inform performance management across both sites is not yet fully developed. NLT has implemented plans to improve and exploit its management information systems to support strategies that promote both consistency and improvement within sector subject areas. Impact of these initiatives is not yet fully apparent. For those learners who have passed their planned completion date the provider has yet to analyse underachievement at programme level and action plan for improvement to address late completion.

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