

North Liverpool Regeneration Company

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 58400

Name of lead inspector: Gwendoline Greaves HMI

Last day of inspection: 10 December 2010

Type of provider: Independent learning provider

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Information about the provider

1. North Liverpool Regeneration Company (NLRCO) is a non-profit company, limited by guarantee. Established in 1996, NLRCO's aim is to provide education and training, support business development and provide community facilities for people living in areas of multi-deprivation. North Liverpool is amongst the top 10% most deprived areas in England; 27% of the population, who are of working age are not employed.
2. In February 2008, NLRCO was contracted by Liverpool Learning and Skills Council to provide pre-apprenticeship training in construction. The contract supports young people who are not in education, employment or training to develop basic construction and employability skills through the achievement of the construction diploma. In February 2010, NLRCO started to deliver full apprenticeships in construction crafts.
3. Currently 55 learners are following the pre-apprenticeship programme and 25 are completing the newly introduced full apprenticeships. To prepare learners for employment or placement, all learners attend NLRCO full time and complete the construction diploma health and safety unit, the Construction Skills Certification Scheme card and qualifications in manual handling, fire prevention and first aid. NLRCO have a service-level agreement with Central Schools Training to deliver all other diploma units on three days each week. NLRCO are responsible for all other aspects of the provision and pastoral support. Both programmes were inspected but it is too soon to judge the achievements of full apprenticeships.
4. The managing director has the overall responsibility for the programme. A project manager is responsible for the operational management, supported by a quality officer, learning mentor, recruitment and placement officer, two centre based tutors and two administrators.
5. The following organisation provides training on behalf of the provider:
 - Central Schools Training

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2009/10
Provision for young learners: Entry to Employment	67 full-time learners
Employer provision: Apprenticeships	25 apprentices

Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 3
Capacity to improve	Grade 3
	Grade
Outcomes for learners	3
Quality of provision	3
Leadership and management	3
Safeguarding	3
Equality and diversity	2

Overall effectiveness

6. Learners enjoy their training and develop a good range of basic construction skills including bricklaying, plastering and joinery. NLRCO places a good emphasis on learner safety and many of the additional qualifications completed by learners promote safe practices. A satisfactory number of learners achieve the diploma in construction with many progressing into employment or further training.
7. Training at the centre is an appropriate mix of theory and practical learning with some well planned sessions containing a good mix of activities. However, some theory sessions are not sufficiently varied and tutors do not always link practical tasks to previous learning. NLRCO provides strong and consistent support for its learners. Staff have high expectations of learners and support them well in achieving their career goals.
8. Leaders and managers have a clear understanding of the needs of learners and pro-actively source funding to extend the opportunities offered to them. Learners benefit from the additional qualifications and incentives that NLRCO offers. Learners' individual rights are valued and promoted through the importance placed on respecting individuals and the environment. However, tutors promote equality of opportunity insufficiently during learners' pastoral reviews.
9. NLRCO are still embedding arrangements to quality assure the programmes and advance good practice. Managers do not use clear and measurable actions and targets sufficiently to improve practice. NLRCO recognises that it does not use data to monitor the progress and achievement of learners adequately. NLRCO is currently investing in a management information system.

Main findings

- Success rates for the diploma in construction have improved and are now satisfactory. So too are success rates at level 1 in literacy and numeracy. High numbers of learners progress into employment or further training. Many learners complete additional occupationally relevant qualifications. Learners improve their confidence. They work safely and contribute to local community projects.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are satisfactory. Learners enjoy and engage in tasks, tutors support them well and offer positive praise and feedback. Tutors introduce theory concepts well. However, some teaching lacks variation and tutors do not reinforce key learning points sufficiently at the start and end of practical lessons.
- Tutors complete satisfactory progress reviews on a regular basis. However, staff on different sites complete separate review documentation and some aspects of the progress reviews are incomplete. Tutors check learners' understanding of health and safety, and equality and diversity using pre-set questions. However, tutors miss good opportunities to extend learners' understanding of equality and diversity.
- Learners value the wide range of additional qualifications, employer placements and continued support in gaining employment that NLRCO offers. Productive partnerships with employers benefit learners through the collaborative planning of placements. Employers provide good workplace opportunities. NLRCO celebrates learners' achievements with awards and incentives.
- Learners understand their programme well and benefit from the guidance NLRCO and their employers provide on the units most relevant for them. Strong and effective support is available for all learners. Learners can attend the centre outside their training schedules and tutors continue to support those learners who have left the programme without finding work.
- NLRCO meets learners' identified additional learning needs promptly and effectively. Links with external agencies benefit learners with dyslexia, dyspraxia and those recovering from substance misuse. NLRCO assesses all learners to identify any barriers to success and provides them with useful practical support.
- NLRCO understands the complex needs of the learners they work hard to attract. They are highly pro-active in sourcing funding to support learners' work readiness through single and collaborative applications with other community groups. The responsive management board influences strategy effectively. However, performance reports to the board are insufficiently detailed and objective.
- NLRCO's safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory. NLRCO takes appropriate actions when safeguarding incidents occur. Learners complete short health and safety qualifications to reinforce their understanding of safe working practices. NLRCO audits all employers' sites, and risk assessments for young people are in place.
- The promotion of equality of opportunity is good. NLRCO places a high degree of importance on respectful behaviour. Learners feel valued as staff encourage

their individual aspirations. NLRCO uses forums to gather the views of learners but there is limited evidence of how it makes learners aware of their responses to concerns raised. NLRCO is developing a more formal system to gather employers' views.

- NLRCO has not yet fully established all aspects of their comprehensive quality framework. Aspects of provision are not yet included in the teaching observation schedule. Too many quality assurance activities lack clear and measurable improvement actions and targets. NLRCO does not use data effectively to monitor progress against learner performance targets.
- The use of resources to secure value for money is good. NLRCO makes very good use of on-site resources to help learners gain additional qualifications. It provides very good incentives to employers through the offer of subsidised salaries. NLRCO has an environmental and sustainability policy that includes good practice in the use of on-site resources and waste recycling.

What does North Liverpool Regeneration Company need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the success rate of the construction diploma through better monitoring of learners' progress and achievement against external indicators.
- Improve the too much satisfactory teaching by devising more inspiring materials for theory lessons and ensuring all practical sessions start and end effectively.
- Improve learners' reviews through more detailed recording of each learner's progress and better promotion of equality and diversity.
- Continue to embed quality assurance through a more comprehensive schedule of teaching observations; set clear and measurable improvement targets to evaluate performance more effectively.
- Improve the existing reporting processes by better use of management information systems and performance reports, to enable the setting and monitoring of appropriately challenging targets.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- how staff are prepared to spend time supporting and mentoring learners to help them to succeed
- how the programmes' content and qualifications prepare learners for employment
- the good and interesting teaching that develops practical skills and improves written work
- the good emphasis NLRCO places on finding a placement that could develop into employment
- the wide range of qualifications that NLRCO offers
- the support that tutors provide that helps to improve literacy, numeracy and construction skills.

What learners would like to see improved:

- support with the written work that supports practical tasks
- the lack of challenge and difficulty in some of the practical tasks that are set
- the lack of vending machines in the learners' canteen.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the good working relationship that NLRCO establishes with employers
- the way NLRCO involves employers in planning learners' training schedules
- the good level of skills and work readiness learners develop before starting their placements.

What employers would like to see improved:

- the response time when communicating with employers.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 3

10. The success rate for the diploma in construction improved by 9% during 2009/10. This brought it into line with NLRCO's contractual target. Progression into employment has improved and is now good. An enthusiastic and motivated staff team helps learners to achieve and to progress into employment offering them good, consistent guidance and support. Staff gather learners' views effectively and remedy any concerns raised. Procedures for gathering employer views are still developing. NLRCO provides good value for money, providing additional qualifications and incentives that benefit learners. Leaders and managers appraise adequately key aspects of provision such as the availability of employer placements, employment opportunities and the extent to which programmes meet learners' individual needs. Managers set appropriate retention and achievement targets. However, data are not used sufficiently to report on and improve performance. Quality assurance procedures are still developing. Self-assessment is appropriately inclusive and grades are broadly in line with those of inspectors. However, too many judgements lack the benefit of secure evidence.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 3

11. In 2009/10, the number of learners who achieved the construction diploma improved to 51%, from 42% in the previous year. In 2008/09, progression rates into employment or further training were good at 73%, and improved to 81% in 2009/10.
12. A very high proportion of learners join the programme with low literacy and numeracy skills. Of these learners, a satisfactory 65% achieved a level 1 in communication or application of number in 2008/09. In 2009/10, 68% of learners achieved level 1 in application of number and 67% achieved level 1 in communication.
13. In 2008/09, 84% of learners achieved their Construction Skills Certification Scheme card, but this reduced to 77% in 2009/10. Achievement of learners taking short, additional qualifications is consistently good at 100%, over two consecutive years.
14. All learners are making satisfactory progress. Learners enjoy their learning, improve their confidence and increase their social and employability skills. Employers value learners' willingness to learn and their motivation to succeed. Learners feel safe and free from harassment. They demonstrate safe working practices and complete work related risk assessments.
15. NLRCO operates in an area of high deprivation. Learners work with many local companies involved in regeneration projects. They have contributed to the recent refurbishing of the centre to provide independent accommodation for vulnerable groups.

The quality of provision

Grade 3

16. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. During theory sessions, tutors explain learning outcomes clearly and link them well to previous lessons. In better sessions, they make effective use of practical activities to develop learners' understanding of units, perimeter and area measurements. In less effective sessions, learners are insufficiently involved, teaching activities lack variety and tutors do not check learners' understanding. Learners enjoy their practical construction sessions. All learners are actively engaged in practical tasks. Tutors provide effective support and use praise well to motivate learners. However, too many practical sessions start without tutors reflecting on previous learning adequately. When finishing the session, they fail to check learners' understanding or summarise key learning points sufficiently.
17. Assessment arrangements are satisfactory and follow awarding body criteria. All assessors have recent industrial experience and relevant qualifications. They reinforce assessment outcomes with positive written feedback and good support.
18. Overall, progress reviews are satisfactory and completed on a regular basis. Staff on different sites complete separate review documentation. Some aspects of reviewing learners' progress are incomplete. Tutors check learners' understanding of health and safety, and equality and diversity using pre-set questions. However, they miss good opportunities to extend learners' wider understanding of equality and diversity.
19. Learners value the wide range of additional qualifications, employer placements and continued support in gaining employment available to them. Those with few academic qualifications have the opportunity to achieve an intermediate level award. Employers provide good workplace opportunities. They develop learners' skills and knowledge progressively as they introduce them to modern industrial practices. NLRCO celebrates learners' achievements through awards, attendance certificates and a good range of incentives. Learners participate in additional activities including team building, five a side football, individual respect week and local health and well-being days. NLRCO works well with its partner employers. In collaboration with local community construction employers, NLRCO are developing training schedules that provide learners with substantial block placements.
20. Information, advice, guidance and support are good. Tutors explain the qualification structure clearly at the start of the programme and during induction. Discussions with tutors and employers ensure that learners choose the most relevant qualification units. All learners complete literacy and numeracy initial assessments, staff identify and respond promptly to those learners with additional support needs. Links with external agencies benefit learners with dyslexia, dyspraxia and those recovering from substance misuse. Tutors assess all learners to identify their barriers to success. Learners receive strong, effective support and can access appropriate and specific resources. Good communication with employers ensures that placements start when

learners are ready for work. Learners attend the centre outside their training schedules. NLRCO supports those learners who have completed the programme but have not yet gained employment through continued weekly mentoring activities. Learners awaiting placement are able to gain experience through their involvement with the community projects and refurbishments that NLRCO manages at the training site.

Leadership and management

Grade 3

21. NLRCO understands well the complex needs of the learners it works hard to attract. All staff have high expectations of their learners. NLRCO are highly proactive in sourcing potential funding that support and extend learners' experiences. NLRCO forms good collaborative partnerships with other community based providers to submit joint funding applications. The responsive and committed management board has good community representation. Their clear community vision influences the organisation's strategy effectively. However, the reports that board members receive on the performance of the programme are insufficiently objective and detailed.
22. Staff are well informed and opportunities to discuss provision and share learner related issues are well utilised through weekly team meetings. NLRCO maintains good and productive communications with their sub-contractor; Central Schools Training. Staff value NLRCO's open and responsive management. Staff and managers take good account of, and reflect on, work roles and performance during appraisal. However, there is insufficient recording of medium and long term occupational and developmental objectives.
23. The company's approach to safeguarding is satisfactory. NLRCO takes appropriate actions when safeguarding incidents occur. All staff have completed appropriate safeguarding training. Arrangements within the centre effectively support a safe environment. Programmes have a good focus on health and safety. Introduced at induction, safe practices are reinforced through learners completing short health and safety qualifications. NLRCO audits all employers' sites and risk assessments for young people are in place.
24. The promotion of equality of opportunity is good. Strategies to meet the complex needs of NLRCO's learners are good. All learners value NLRCO's consistent focus on respectful behaviour. NLRCO responds quickly, taking good decisive actions, where inappropriate behaviour is apparent. Learners feel valued, their aspirations are encouraged and staff consistently promote cohesive teamwork. Learners from areas recognised as closed communities, work together harmoniously whilst at the centre. Strategies to attract under-represented groups have yet to be successful. However, NLRCO maintains their links with the Muslim community and provides information in other languages. NLRCO monitors the performance of different groups but low numbers limit a clear analysis of trends.
25. Learners feel staff listen to their views and respond to their individual needs. A series of small forums gather the views of learners but there is limited evidence

to show how NLRCO makes learners aware of responses to their concerns. Employers provide their comments through staff visits. NLRCO are developing a more formal system to gather the views of employers.

26. NLRCO has not yet established all aspects of their comprehensive quality framework fully. Some aspects of provision have yet to be included in the observation schedule. Although observation reports include clear and incisive judgements, few have clear, measurable actions to help staff improve practice. Similarly, performance monitoring of subcontractors and staff appraisals does not result in development or improvement actions. Managers set suitable performance targets for learner recruitment, retention, achievement and the availability of placements. However, NLRCO recognises that they do not use data effectively to review performance or set improvement targets. NLRCO is investing in a new management information system.
27. The use of resources to secure value for money is good. NLRCO makes very good use of on-site resources to enable learners to gain additional qualifications. They provide very good incentives to employers through the offer of subsidised salaries. NLRCO has an environmental and sustainability policy that includes good practice in the use of on-site resources and private collection of waste for recycling.

Information about the inspection

28. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's programme manager, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the funding body, and the providers data on learners and their achievement over the period of the contract
29. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gain the views of learners and employers. They also looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed for the provider. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the provider offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)			
North Liverpool Regeneration Company			
Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; 16-18 Learner responsive: FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; 19+ responsive: FE full- and part-time courses; Employer responsive: Train to Gain, apprenticeships			
Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	16-18 Learner responsive	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners			
Full-time learners	80	55	25
Part-time learners	0	0	0
Overall effectiveness	3	3	3
Capacity to improve	3		
Outcomes for learners	3	3	3
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	3		
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	3		
How well do learners progress?	3		
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2		
How safe do learners feel?	3		
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	3		
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	2		
Quality of provision	3	3	3
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	3		
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2		
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	3		
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2		
Leadership and management	3	3	3
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2		
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	3		
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	3		
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2		
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	3		
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	3		
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2		

*where applicable to the type of provision

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