

Barchester Healthcare Limited

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 55614

Name of lead inspector: Deavon Baker-Oxley HMI

Last day of inspection: 28 June 2012

Type of provider: Employer

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Information about the provider

1. Barchester Healthcare (Barchester) is a privately owned independent healthcare company. It provides nursing and residential services across the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. The company employs over 16,000 staff who look after some 10,000 people. Its original focus was on older people in care homes but it has now developed other specialist services. It has recently acquired a number of early years nurseries.
2. Barchester offers apprenticeship and workforce development training programmes in: health, public services and care; hospitality and catering; Skills for Life; business, administration and law. Approximately 18% of the training delivered by Barchester Healthcare is government funded by the National Employer Services. Barchester subcontracts some of its training. All training is on the job, and all learners are employees of Barchester. Learners are situated across the whole of the country.
3. The central learning and development team works across Barchester to deliver support and facilitate all learning activities throughout the company. The academy manager reports to the director of learning and development. Six co-ordinating assessors and 11 part-time assessors carry out assessment.
4. The following organisation provides training on behalf of the provider:
 - Mind-Leader (Skills for Life programme)

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2010/11
Employer provision:	
Train to Gain	213 learners
Apprenticeships	327 apprentices

Summary report

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

Overall effectiveness of provision		Grade 2
Capacity to improve		Grade 2
		Grade
Outcomes for learners		2
Quality of provision		2
Leadership and management		2
Safeguarding		2
Equality and diversity		2
Subject Areas		Grade
Health, public services and care		2

Overall effectiveness

5. The vast majority of learners achieve their qualifications and the number completing within the planned period is satisfactory and improving. Most current learners are making progress. However, data for previous years shows that there has been slow progress for a few learners. Learners develop self-confidence and good workplace skills, and learn to apply theory to the practice within their workplace very well. Learners are motivated, enjoy their programmes and feel safe.
6. Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Learners gain very good knowledge and skills from a very broad range of high quality in-house training programmes that are integrated very well with assessment and learning for the apprenticeships. Assessment practice across the provision is thorough. The flexibility of assessors and the structure of the provision meets learners' and managers' needs well. Many managers are involved in learners' progress reviews. However, a minority of managers in care are not sufficiently involved in reviewing and recording progress and giving written feedback to learners. Technology is used well to support learning, though a minority of learners are not able to access electronic portfolios with ease and this is a barrier to their progress.

7. Overall management of the provision is good. Barchester has taken very effective action to improve outcomes for all learners. Arrangements for safeguarding learners and promoting safe working practices are good. Equality and diversity are promoted effectively to all learners. The self-assessment process is satisfactory and identifies most areas for improvement, however it is overly descriptive. The quality improvement plans are used effectively to manage and monitor areas for improvement, however management of the subcontractor's quality assurance arrangements does not include the observation of teaching and learning.

Main findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Success rates show an improving trend well above the national rates. Most current learners are making good progress. A minority of learners make slow progress. Progression rates to higher qualifications are high. Early years learners have very high progression rates into employment.
- Learners develop good personal and vocational skills. They enjoy learning and take pride in presenting their work. They are able to perform their roles with greater efficiency and understanding. Learners develop increased confidence. They have good opportunities to progress to further training on completion of their programmes and take on increased responsibility at work. In early years this aspect of provision is outstanding.
- Learners feel safe in their workplaces. Good attention is given to safe working practices and awareness of health and safety guidance and procedures. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves, each other and those they care for, safe.
- The quality of teaching, training and assessment is good. Initial assessment is thorough and used appropriately to plan learning and assessment. Assessment is well planned and used effectively by assessors and learners to set short-term targets for unit completion. Assessors use a good range of interesting assessment methods that promote the development of skills.
- Arrangements for reviewing long-term targets and recording progress are good. Technology is used very effectively to support learning but a small minority of learners on care programmes who prefer not to use computers find this method difficult and require additional support to access their e-portfolios. Resources are generally good and staff are highly skilled and experienced.
- Assessors promote equality and diversity well in relation to occupational standards. Many learners demonstrate positive behaviour and attitudes towards respect and dignity for those they care for. Learners understand the principles and values of equality and diversity in care and early years. Learners in childcare have a good understanding of the disadvantages faced by some children, and person-centred care is promoted very well for adults.
- Assessment and support for literacy and numeracy are good, although a few learners have had to delay their key skills work because of staff absence and

insufficient preparation for tests and portfolio building. Most learners are aware of the level of progress they are making and know what they have to do to complete their course. Assessors visit learners very frequently and are flexible in meeting their needs.

- The range of courses available is broad and varied, and meets the needs and interests of learners and managers very well. Partnerships with employers are strong and used effectively to promote and support learning. However, in a few instances general managers in care are not sufficiently involved in reviewing learners' progress.
- Personal support, and support for learners with additional needs are good. Support is planned, well organised and effective. Staff provide good advice about progression and career planning, such as nurse training and preparing for care management.
- Barchester has a very clear strategy and is committed to ensuring its workforce is well qualified. Academies have particularly high expectations for what learners can achieve. Investment and improvements in learning resources and the development of trainers and assessors inspires and motivates learners. Barchester is successful in encouraging more school leavers to consider a career in health and social care.
- Barchester promotes equality and diversity well in the delivery of its programmes. All employees are able to access training courses and qualifications. The achievement rates for different groups of learners are monitored closely and the company has reduced the difference in performance between male and female learners.
- Barchester takes appropriate action to address any issues raised by learners. However, the variety of approaches used to gather feedback on different programmes makes it difficult to measure satisfaction levels over time or to evaluate the effectiveness of the different programmes and improvements made.
- Barchester manages and monitor improvements well through regular meetings and the quality improvement plans. Learning and development managers are clear about what aspects of provision should be improved although the self-assessment report is too descriptive. Arrangements to quality assure the provision are generally satisfactory although the observations of teaching and learning do not focus sufficiently on the learners' experience.

What does Barchester Healthcare Limited need to do to improve further?

- Ensure all learners complete their programmes within the stated end date by improving arrangements for learners to prepare for key skills testing and portfolio completion in a timely manner.
- Increase the support and access available to learners seeking to use the e-learning resources and offer more flexible alternatives such as paper based portfolios, to better meet all learners' needs.

- Ensure all general managers in care are engaged in recognising, reviewing and recording progress, by involving them fully in the review process and encouraging written feedback on the review documentation.
- Develop more coherent methods for gathering and analysing learners' and managers' feedback on all programmes to ensure areas for improvement are identified, and levels of satisfaction for different programmes can be monitored over time.
- Ensure quality improvement arrangements, particularly the use of observations, focus on the quality of learners' experiences, and are used effectively to contribute to the performance management of trainers and assessors across the provision.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the very good support
- the very interesting and well delivered training
- the enjoyable learning
- becoming better carers
- the really friendly staff
- the really clear way that assessors explain things
- the very good key skills support.

What learners would like to see improved:

- more help to use computers
- clearer assessment questions
- access to the internet on work-based computers
- timetables for courses in childcare to be issued earlier.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the way that mandatory training and apprenticeships are blended well together
- learners increasing their value and effectiveness within the workplace
- the very flexible and helpful training team
- working with assessors to support learners to develop and achieve.

What employers would like to see improved:

- computer access and support for learners.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 2

8. Barchester has made significant improvements since the previous inspection. Barchester quality development plans provide an effective framework for improvement and include challenging and realistic targets that managers use well to monitor the provision. Barchester has made good progress towards achieving these targets. Its self-assessment process is satisfactory, highlighting most of the areas identified by inspectors; however, its report was overly descriptive. Initiatives to improve success rates since the previous inspection have been successful, and success rates are high for all groups of learners. Learners' achievement of their qualifications within the agreed timescales has also improved to around the national averages. The quality of teaching and learning has improved and is now good. The arrangements for quality assuring its provision are much improved, although Barchester does not observe teaching and learning in the subcontracted provision.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

9. Success rates are high across all subject areas. The number of learners achieving within their planned training period has steadily improved in line with national rates in each subject area. Different groups of learners show no substantial differences in success rates. Current learners are making satisfactory to good progress and are expected to achieve by their planned end date. However, data for previous years shows that there has been slow progress for a few learners and a minority are still making slow progress this year. Progression is good for early years and care learners from intermediate to advanced programmes.
10. Learners develop good workplace skills and increased self-confidence. Many learners are new to the care and early year's sector, but very quickly become familiar with their roles and responsibilities. Learners apply their new skills and knowledge well in the workplace, raising the standards of care received by children and those receiving care and personal support. Learners' work is of a good standard. A small minority of learners in care do not receive sufficient support to use the e-learning resources and in a few instances this has delayed progress. Learners develop the literacy, numeracy and language skills required to complete their programmes and progress, however a small minority of learners do not receive sufficient support to complete their key skills within their planned end date.
11. All learners feel safe. They are careful to apply safe working practices such as infection control and security. They understand well how to manage risk and respect individuals equally. They pay very close attention to meeting the individual needs of those they support and care for.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

12. Training and learning are good overall. A wide range of good and some outstanding in-house training and additional qualifications is combined very well with the requirements of the programmes. This includes safeguarding of vulnerable adults and dementia awareness. Trainers ensure all learners are engaged fully in training sessions. Assessors provide highly effective individual support. Arrangements for induction and initial assessment are good. Target setting is clear, purposeful and relates to programme completion. Trainers assess learners' literacy and numeracy needs well and this is used effectively by many trainers in their planning to meet individual needs. Technology is used very effectively to promote and support learning. Electronic portfolios and high quality learning resources are available to all learners through the internet. The vast majority of learners find this very effective but a few learners, particularly those on care programmes, do not have sufficient support to use this technology with confidence. Access to computers and e-learning resources is good in almost all workplaces.
13. Staff have good skills and expertise to provide good quality learning and assessment for each learner. Assessment of learners' performance and progress is prompt, fair and reliable. Arrangements for internal verification are thorough and there are several examples of this leading to identification and sharing of good practice. Almost all learners have a good understanding of what they have to do to complete their programmes and what they have to do to improve. Equality and diversity are addressed very thoroughly and are promoted very well by assessors during visits and reviews. Assessors ensure learners understand how aspects of equality and diversity impact on the adults and children they care for at work.
14. Barchester provides a wide range of courses and training to meet the needs and interests of learners and the staffing and skills needs for the care settings.
15. Partnerships with employers are strong. General managers are very supportive and are involved in planning and reviewing learning. However, a few general managers in care are not involved sufficiently in reviewing and recording progress. Assessors work very flexibly to meet learners' and general managers' needs.
16. Barchester provides very good care, guidance and support for learners, that motivates them and helps personal achievement and success. Learners with additional needs receive very good support. Initial assessment is used very well to identify needs accurately early in the programme and in almost all cases these are met quickly through the provision of good resources and highly effective support. All learners understand their rights and responsibilities. Learners trust and respect their trainers and assessors, and make very good use of their experience, knowledge and advice. Staff have good subject area

knowledge and give very close and well organised attention to developing their own skills and qualifications.

Leadership and management

Grade 2

17. Barchester has very high expectations of what its employees can achieve and sets extremely demanding targets. Employees' learning and development has a particularly high profile in Barchester and is exemplified by the establishment of the Barchester Business School and its four training academies in 2009. Training programmes are being developed continually to meet the wide ranging needs of the business and to provide staff with a very well-structured career path. Significant investment is made in learning resources and ensuring trainers based in the care homes gain nationally recognised training qualifications. Staff demonstrate very positive attitudes and behaviours to inspire learners and improve success rates.
18. Barchester responds particularly well to national priorities, and is committed to attracting more young people onto apprenticeship programmes in the care sector, which has traditionally recruited mainly adult learners. Barchester's work and commitment to learning and development is recognised through the achievement of several national awards.
19. Arrangements for safeguarding learners and promoting safe working practices are good. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place. All employees have enhanced criminal record bureau checks before they start work in Barchester care homes or nurseries. Induction includes a specific learning activity on safeguarding to ensure learners understand and recognise the signs and symptoms of types of abuse and how to respond. All employees receive routine mandatory training to maintain levels of knowledge and awareness. Appropriate risk assessments are in place to ensure young learners are suitably protected. On childcare programmes, e-safety is highlighted through a policy on social networking.
20. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. All Barchester employees are able to take qualifications offered by the academies regardless of whether they are funded or not. Employees accessing learning come from all age groups, genders and ethnic backgrounds. Throughout their programmes, learners are encouraged to recognise and celebrate the diverse backgrounds and cultures of the residents and children with whom they work. A confidential helpline is available if learners need support on personal matters or to raise concerns about the treatment of others.
21. Currently, no significant differences exist in the success rates for different groups of learners. When staff identified the low success rates for male learners in 2008/09, assessors worked very closely with a small number of male learners to ensure that this gap was closed. In 2009/10 male learner success rates were just above those of female learners and in the current year success rates are

similar. Learners from minority groups perform at a similar level to other groups.

22. Barchester gathers feedback from learners and managers in care homes. However as this is collected in a variety of formats it is difficult to compare findings from year to year and between different programmes. Effective use is made of an on-line survey following the introduction of the e-portfolio system. Learners' suggestions resulted in several improvements being made to the system. Formal mid-year evaluations are summarised although the results are not compared to those from previous years to establish trends in satisfaction levels.
23. Quality improvement plans are used effectively to manage and monitor areas for improvement. The self-assessment report identifies most of the strengths and areas for improvement of the provision but also includes too much description about the various processes used. Barchester has a defined quality monitoring cycle that ensures the programmes meet the standards set. Internal verification processes are thorough and assessors attend regular standardisation meetings, helping to ensure effective implementation of new qualifications and processes. Observations of teaching and learning are completed but the forms used focus more on the performance of the trainer and not enough on the quality of the learning experience. Barchester monitors the performance of the subcontractor closely through data analysis and regular reviews of learners' progress. However, they do not observation the sub-contractor's teaching and learning.
24. Value for money is good. Success rates are high and staff retention is better amongst employees who are on training programmes. The company offers training courses to all employees whether they are eligible for government funding or not. Barchester is reviewing different ways it can quantify the return on investment that learning and development brings to the company.

Information about the inspection

25. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and three additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's head of contract and development, 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 previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
26. 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)

Barchester Health Care Limited

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	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners		
Full-time learners	0	0
Part-time learners	297	297
Overall effectiveness	2	2
Capacity to improve	2	
Outcomes for learners	2	2
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2	
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2	
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?	2	
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	n/a	
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	2	
Quality of provision	2	2
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2	
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?	2	
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2	
Leadership and management	2	2
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	1	
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	n/a	
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2	
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?	2	
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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