Learning and Skills inspection report

Date published: 14 December 2012 Inspection Number: 399112

URN: 58161



Nottinghamshire Training Network improving lives Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		05-09 November 2012		
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement-3		
Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement-3		
Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement-3			
Quality of teaching, learning and as	Requires improvement-3			
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Requires improvement-3		

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider requires improvement because:

- Too many learners do not complete their qualifications within the expected time.
- Staff give insufficient priority to developing the learners' English skills.
- In several programmes, trainers do not always challenge, inspire and motivate learners to extend their learning.
- Use of the outcomes from initial assessments is ineffective in planning individual learning programmes.
- Quality assurance and quality improvement strategies are at an early stage and managers have not fully developed and implemented them to improve the quality of the learners' experience.
- Promotion of equality and diversity throughout the learning programmes requires further development.

This provider has the following strengths:

- A high proportion of learners achieve their qualifications.
- Learners develop good employability skills with improved confidence and self-esteem.
- The programmes meet the learners and employers' needs very well.
- Nottinghamshire Training Network (NTN) staff are particularly effective in building capacity with sub-contractors, a minority of whom progress to gaining contracts for government-funded training in their own right.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve the planning of teaching and learning so learners are able to meet all elements of their framework within the planned timescale.
- Ensure teachers make good use of a variety of teaching strategies to challenge, inspire and motivate learners to further their learning.
- Use the results of initial assessments to develop a strategy for teaching English to speakers of other languages, embedded into the vocational programmes where appropriate.
- Use reviews more effectively to set clear targets for each learner that stretch and challenge them during learning.
- Implement the procedures identified for quality improvement across all subcontractors, paying particular attention to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Analyse data effectively to set challenging quality improvement targets for all sub-contractors.
- Promote equality and diversity throughout all learners' programmes.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners

- Success rates have increased continuously over the last three years and are now high, and mostly in line with national averages. However, a large number of learners fail to achieve their qualifications by their planned end date. The integration of key and functional skills is inconsistent across subcontractors and needs improving, to ensure that learners are able to achieve the full framework by their planned end date. Those learners undertaking employability programmes achieve high pass rates. No significant differences exist in the achievement of outcomes between different groups of learners. Current learners are still making slow progress.
- Most learners develop good workplace skills and demonstrate a sound understanding of the theoretical knowledge that underpins their work. For example, learners undertaking the taxi drivers' qualification are able to display a good understanding of health, safety and customer care, and through discussions, are able to apply the theory to their jobs well. Learners on the employability programme develop in confidence and self-esteem. The vast majority of learners are motivated to achieve their qualification.
- Learners are developing skills that help to improve their employability. For example, one learner now reads job advertisements in more detail and ensures he meets all the necessary requirements before making an application. Learners are becoming more proficient in carrying out tasks that have a positive effect on their personal lives. For example, emailing family in other parts of the world. Most learners speak of wishing to progress to study at a higher level.
- The standard of learners' portfolios is variable across subcontractors. Learners do not always present portfolio evidence and their work well and do not always meet the required standards within health and social care programmes. The majority of learners have a good awareness of health and safety and feel safe. However, a minority of learners in health and social care do not always apply their safeguarding knowledge when working in domiciliary care.
- Progression across most subcontractors is good with most learners gaining qualifications that enable them to further their careers. For example, within construction a minority become qualified fork- lift drivers. Similarly, a minority of learners on health and social care programmes progress from intermediate to advanced apprentice training. However, where the subcontractor

only offers one particular qualification no further advice is available to learners to further their career.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement, due to the number of learners not achieving by their planned end date. Lessons and training sessions are not always sufficiently challenging and do not extend too many learners' knowledge, understanding or their ability to apply their skills in the workplace.
- Teachers do not always use their planned teaching strategies well enough to provide a wide range of learning opportunities to meet all individual learners' needs. Except in employability programmes, teaching resources, including information and communications technology (ICT), do not sufficiently engage learners or promote independent learning, including the development of research skills. Where the planning of teaching and training is better, learners develop higher-level skills and understanding appropriate to their workplace roles.
- Most teachers and assessors have good current industrial and occupational experience. They are generally well qualified, but do not always use their knowledge and expertise for maximum benefit to promote meaningful workplace-focused learning. Most learners develop skills which are good and of industry standard. However, evidence within their portfolios does not demonstrate this well enough.
- Assessors use a limited range of assessments and a minority of learners produce too narrow a range of written evidence to meet vocational unit requirements at the advanced level. However, they demonstrate their understanding of key concepts more effectively during discussions. In a few instances, particularly in construction, assessors use innovative methods, including audio, video and photographic evidence. For most learners, evidence is mainly the assessors' written observation record, witness testimonies, workbooks and question and answer sheets rather than work which the learner produces and owns.
- Learners receive helpful and informative verbal feedback during and after an assessment. With the exception of the employability programme, where it is better, staff do not routinely record feedback or use it to set challenging targets for the next assessment. Vocational learners' portfolios often do not contain sufficient written evidence to show progress and the skills they develop.
- On a minority of programmes, the planning of learners' induction is good, but for other subjects it is ineffective. Where induction is successful, learners gain clear information about the programme. They take initial assessments of their literacy, numeracy and learning styles. However, the results of these assessments staff do not always use effectively to plan individualised learning or resolve any specialist support needs identified.
- The majority of learners completing functional skills programmes experience an improvement in their life skills. Written feedback within vocational areas does not always guide learners as to what they need to do to improve. Not all staff have sufficient skills and expertise to improve fully learners' functional skills. The integration of English, mathematics and functional skills into vocational learning is uneven. For a minority of learners, staff do provide functional skills support and delivery which link to the workplace. Communication between vocational, English and mathematics assessors is not always efficient. They often do not share information on learners' progress, preventing effective planning for learning support.
- Advice and guidance at the start and during the programmes are not always effective. Staff do not always place a minority of learners in health and social care on the most suitable level of course. Advice for learners to progress to higher-level programmes or to support career progression is limited.
- During the induction, learners do not cover health, safety, equality, and diversity adequately, often providing cursory or incorrect answers, which assessors do not correct. They do not follow

up these responses to develop further learners' understanding during reviews. Promotion of equality and diversity during learning is not enough, although this is better in the transport operations and maintenance programmes.

■ Tutors do not promote or extend learners' awareness and understanding of equality and diversity through teaching, training or assessment, or in the workplace. Learners' files contain little evidence to demonstrate their understanding or knowledge, and its application within the workplace.

Health and social care

Apprenticeships Other work based learning

- Teaching learning and assessment require improvement, resulting in most current learners making slow progress and not achieving their potential. Poor integration of functional skills into the programme makes it worse. A minority of learners are on the wrong level programme.
- In a minority of sessions, teaching is uninspiring with an over-reliance on workbooks, and question and answer sheets to support learning and skill development. Learners have little opportunity to develop independent learning and research skills, particularly at advanced level. Learners and employers appreciate the flexibility of assessors in meeting individual needs and accommodating learners' shift patterns. Employers are not involved in the planning of learning, but all are involved in the scheduling of assessor's visits to the workplace.
- A minority of learners build successfully on existing skills and contribute effectively to improving workplace practice for the benefit of service users, but others do not make the same progress. Some learners develop good personal and social skills to support skill development, but others lack confidence and the ability to communicate effectively. Learners enjoy their studies and are motivated to improve their knowledge, with a minority progressing from intermediate to advanced level.
- Assessors are well qualified and experienced, but do not always use their skills effectively to help learners reach their potential. For example, they do not provide opportunities for learners to apply their knowledge to certain safeguarding issues in domiciliary care settings.
- Appropriate opportunities are not always available for learners to reflect on their progress. Staff do not ensure the use of ICT is effective in improve learning. For example, to access specific knowledge and information or to view video clips.
- The use of initial assessment to identify individual needs is inadequate. Staff do not always provide specific additional support. For example, when learners' first language is not English, they then face challenges with speaking and writing due to lack of help.
- Assessor's verbal feedback to learners is detailed and constructive, but written feedback is not as informative. Employers are not involved in learners' progress reviews, but receive regular feedback on progress and achievement. Tracking and recording of learners' progress uses achievement of qualification units and not targets for each individual. This leads to slow progress.
- The planning of the provision and support for key and functional skills support is not effective. A minority of learners' use of English and technical terms is weak, leading to a poor level of written work, particularly sentence construction. Little evidence is available of a well-defined strategy to support assessors in embedding functional skills into their planning and workplace activities.

- Information, advice and guidance require improvement. Learners are not clear about the demands of the programme and framework. Staff often place them on too high a level of course, which learners' lack of knowledge and understanding, demonstrated in their written work, confirms this issue.
- Integration of equality and diversity into the learning programme is not effective. Staff rely too heavily on question and answer sheets to confirm individuals understanding of these topics and to explore their implications when working within the care industry.

Transportation operations and maintenance

Other work based learning

- Teaching, learning and assessment on the vehicle-driving course requires improvement. Whilst some teaching and support are good, as reflected in the high success rates, a minority of learners experience poor assessment practices detrimental to learning. Learners enjoy the course and gain relevant new work skills and knowledge, which they can apply in the workplace.
- Learners work independently using good quality booklets, which provide knowledge evidence and include a good understanding of equality, diversity, health and safety. Learners' written answers demonstrate their knowledge adequately, but assessors provide insufficient feedback. The use of simulation is effective. For example, staff and learners used an exercise on helping passengers in wheelchairs.
- Assessors provide high levels of coaching, particularly to learners who do not have a sufficiently good command of the English language. However, support for the development of learners' English language skills is insufficient. Staff and learners make insufficient use of technology. For example, to present case studies, including videos, which could help develop a deeper understanding.
- Linking of practical activity to underpinning knowledge is variable. In the best cases, staff develop them together, and reinforce understanding well, enabling learners to achieve the NVQ units progressively through the course. However, in a minority of instances staff pay too much attention to theory and too little to practice, so that the achievement of units is left until late in the course.
- Practical assessment practices are inconsistent. In the best cases, assessors demonstrate expert skills and knowledge, and use questioning techniques well to reinforce understanding and assess learning. They pay good attention to the consequences of insufficient attention to customer care, or health and safety. Learners in these sessions responded well, demonstrating a good level of knowledge and understanding.
- In a minority of sessions, assessors mix teaching, coaching and assessment resulting in assessment that is insufficiently robust, and a lack of clarity about whether the learner has achieved the necessary competence. In these sessions, staff do not use questioning effectively.
- Progress reviews and the completion of assessment plans take place regularly, but do not improve learning sufficiently. Short-term learning targets are too generic to be useful. Staff do not use the outcomes of initial assessment to inform learning and the establishment of a planned schedule of progress.
- Assessors provide good informal support. They meet learners at times and places that fit in with work well. The formal arrangements to support learners who have additional learning needs in literacy and English language are underdeveloped. Staff pay superficial attention to spelling and grammar in assessed work

- Advice and guidance are effective in motivating learners on a programme designed to match their aspirations. However, there advice on career progression is limited.
- Induction requires improvement. In a few cases, learners are not involved sufficiently, staff do not check their understanding and learning, and as a result, they lose interest. Staff do not reinforce adequately equality and diversity.

Building and construction

Apprenticeships
Other work based learning

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. Success rates have been high, but have declined in the past two years. Assessors plan learning well to meet the aspirations of learners. However, most assessments merely confirm workplace competence and provide the necessary accreditation. Assessors use their vocational knowledge very well to improve learning sessions.
- Staff plan programmes well to ensure that learners develop and extend their knowledge of health and safety, especially safe working and the use of personal protective equipment. Learners work in potentially highly hazardous situations for employees and the public. Assessors rigorously emphasise and reinforce appropriate behaviour through detailed questioning, discussion and scenarios.
- Assessors plan assessment and monitor learners' progress effectively. Learners are clear about the progress they are making. All learners are employees of the industry and most have been performing their roles for many years. The NVQ assessment confirms their competence and for most, this is the first certificate they have received. Learners speak positively about their improved confidence and self-esteem, and a few progress to supervisory qualifications. Employers are equally positive about the improved motivation and productivity of learners.
- Assessors are not developing learners by encouraging ownership and independent learning. Learners do not own their portfolios sufficiently. The assessors complete the evidence in the learners' portfolios after observing and questioning them. In a few instances, assessors use audio and video recording, and photographs. For most learners the evidence is merely the assessors' written observation record. However, learners are able to demonstrate their understanding of key concepts.
- Learners receive helpful and informative verbal feedback during and after an assessment. However, staff do not routinely record this information or use it to inform targets for their next assessment. Learners seldom produce any written work. As a result, learners miss opportunities to improve their literacy.
- All learners participate in a well-planned induction, which effectively provides clear information about the programme, the role of the assessor, and the standards they have to achieve. They also take an adequate initial assessment of their literacy, numeracy and learning styles. The outcomes, staff record in the learning plans. However, staff do not use this information to plan individualised learning or support. Advice and guidance at the start and during the programmes are effective in motivating learners to be successful on a programme which matches their employment aspirations. However, for many, advice on progression to higher-level programmes or career progression is limited.
- During induction, learners show incorrect understanding of health, safety and equality topics, which assessors do not rectify. They do not follow up these instances with further challenges in order to develop the learners' understanding during training or reviews.

Employability training

Employability

- Teaching learning and assessment require improvement. Success rates for learners are high and have been over a period of years. However, a minority of learners fail to complete within their planned end date.
- Business administration, and health and social care learners with good levels of English and mathematics benefit from revisiting and consolidating their knowledge to meet the functional skills element of their qualifications. However, other learners are not developing new skills well enough. Too often vocational tutors miss opportunities to develop learners' functional skills.
- Tutors work sensitively with learners and encourage those who are reluctant to learn to view their studies positively. This is particularly the case with those apprentices who initially fail to see the relevance of undertaking a functional skills qualification. Learners who have been unsuccessful at school appreciate the calm and reassuring approach taken by staff and respond well to the good levels of informal support they receive.
- No formalised strategies are in place to support learners with additional learning needs. Learners with very low levels of literacy and numeracy, staff generally direct to other provision. Not all staff hold specialist qualifications at a high enough level to support all aspects of learners' functional skills development. The sharing of information on learners' additional needs with functional skills tutors does not always take place, making the planning of teaching and learning ineffective.
- Tutors use a variety of methods to assess learners' starting points. In most cases, they apply a useful comprehensive diagnostic test that provides information on areas requiring improvement. However, not all learners benefit from a detailed assessment of their skills levels. It is not always possible to plan learning and measure progress accurately from the initial assessment tools used by a minority of subcontractors. They do not use further diagnostic tools to assess learners' needs, which stop staff fully meeting these needs.
- Learners mostly work on individual tasks within sessions. However, the planning, recording and tracking of skills development is frequently too generic to offer detailed and specific guidance to learners as to what they need to do to improve further. In the majority of cases, targets are too broad and do not change over time to reflect small development steps taken.
- A minority of subcontractors use good quality resources, the majority of which are electronic, to support learning. Most learners work on these resources independently and appreciate the electronic feedback they receive from tutors. However, in several learning rooms no printer is available for learners to view their work in hard copy and to enable staff to make written comments. This frequently results in delayed feedback. Although a few vocationally relevant functional skills resources for apprentices are available, this is not consistent across the provision.
- Advice and guidance are effective in motivating learners on a programme designed to improve their employability skills and give advice as to the next steps to take.
- Although learners work together cooperatively in very mixed groups, tutors do not systematically promote equality and diversity sufficiently within the overall delivery and reviews of learning.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

- All staff and the board of NTN have a good awareness of the business planning process and have a shared responsibility for the delivery of the business plan. The plan has a clear focus on the quality of provision by the network of subcontractors, which was a weakness at the previous inspection. Feedback from departments on the progress against objectives is systematic, and provides managers and the Board with relevant information on progress.
- Most subcontractors are new to the network and do not have sufficient awareness of NTN's vision. NTN is still in the process of establishing challenging targets with its subcontractors to support its identified objectives.
- NTN celebrates success well and is an effective advocate for apprenticeships, for which it has received national recognition. Members of the network benefit from and speak highly of a wide range of training and development workshops that include creating a self-assessment report and teaching, learning and assessment. Subcontractors are supportive of each other and share good practice and expertise satisfactorily. Peer review is well established and it focuses particularly on observing teaching, learning and assessment. However, quality of teaching learning and assessment is inconsistent and needs improvement.
- NTN has a clear strategy for improving the standard of teaching, learning and assessment. It has provided recent relevant training and development for subcontractors. It has undertaken a recent review of the observations of teaching, learning and assessment and devised an action plan that identifies improvements that it is implementing with each subcontractor. However, this has not had a measurable impact on the quality of teaching learning and assessment. Staff do not link consistently outcomes from observations of teaching, learning and assessment observation to professional development.
- NTN's latest self-assessment report accurately identified the areas for improvement highlighted by inspectors. NTN has encouraged all subcontractors to develop their own self-assessment report. Most subcontractors have received well the training in the production of a self-assessment report; a minority are now able to produce a report for the first time. However, subcontractors do not always understand the self-assessment, and its link to improving the provision. Staff are now using the subcontractors' self-assessment reports to inform the NTN self-assessment report, but it is too soon to judge the effectiveness of this process.
- Subcontractors work within their own quality frameworks and not within an overall quality framework. This results in variations in the quality of provision. Monitoring of sub-contractors has not been consistent since 2011/12, which has affected the development of a minority of them, particularly those few who are new to providing apprenticeships. However, the contractual arrangements to assure the quality of provision, equality and diversity and safeguarding are comprehensive.
- The collection and use of users' views to develop capacity and introduce improvements is variable amongst subcontractors. The collection of users' views is not always systematic and managers do not use them rigorously to identify and introduce improvements. However, NTN staff have undertaken a recent audit of all subcontractors that includes the use of users' views to identify and introduce improvements.
- Board members' expertise and representation on a wide-range of organisations and relevant groups and committees ensures NTN has a clear focus on local and national priorities. NTN is very successful in building capacity with its subcontractors, a minority of whom progress to obtaining their own government funded contracts. The selection of subcontractors is careful and the range of provision NTN offers meets the needs and interests of learners and employers very well.
- NTN staff collect performance data. They have used it to run a recent seminar for subcontractors on data. However, subcontractors' use and understanding of equality and

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diversity data is variable. The use of data to rectify underperformance is also variable. Learners feel safe and generally adopt safe working practices. NTN meets its statutory requirements concerning safeguarding. It holds a central register of Criminal Records Bureau checks, and monitors subcontractors' safeguarding arrangements satisfactorily. However, staff miss opportunities to integrate safeguarding throughout the learners' programmes.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Nottinghamshire Training Network									
Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16 Learning programmes	16-18 Learning programmes	19+ Learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Other work- based learning	Employability	Foundation Learning	Community learning
Overall effectiveness	3				3	3	3		
Outcomes for learners	3				3	3	3		
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	3				3	3	3		
The effectiveness of leadership and management	3				3	3	3		

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	
Health and social care	3
Transportation operations and maintenance	
Building and construction	
Employability training	

Provider details

Nottinghamshire Training Network			
Type of provider Independent learning provider			
Age range of learners	19+		
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 1099		
	Part-time: N/A		
Principal/CEO	Janet Charlton		
Date of previous inspection	October 2009 partial re-inspection		
Website address	www.ntn-wbl.org.uk		

Provider information at the time of	the ins	pection	n						
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or Leve		vel 2 Leve				vel 4 above		
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	
Full-time	N/A	14	N/A	531	N/A	101	N/A	1	
Part-time	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Number of apprentices by	Inte	rmedia	te	Advanced			Highe	er	
Apprenticeship level and age	16-18	19)+	16-18	19+	16-	-18	19+	
	N/A	2	13	N/A	109	N,	/A	3	
	N1/A								
Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A								
Number of community learners	N/A								
Number of employability learners	126								
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)								
At the time of inspection the	@ Home Childcare Training Limited								
provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Centre for Business Development								
	•	CQ3							
	•	CQM Le	arning						
	■ Diane Smith Associates Limited								
	Focus Management For Business Limited								
	•	The NE	Group						
	•	Safety I	Problem	Solutions	UK Limite	d			
	Shaping Skills Limited								

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- Strategic Training Solutions (Mansfield) Limited
- The Learning Zone
- Ultimate Performance Training Centre

Additional information

Nottinghamshire Training Network (NTN) is a not for profit, membership based organisation and has been trading since 2002. Its network consists of local colleges, national and local training providers. NTN does not directly deliver, but subcontracts its provision to a number of subcontractors. Over the last five years, NTN has subcontracted its WPL (previously known as Train to Gain) and apprenticeship provision to approximately 15 subcontractors, servicing and supporting over 800 businesses. Mansfield is the base for NTN. Learners are based nationally and the majority are employed. The impact of socio-economic factors affects some learners more than others. The NTN'S core team consist of eleven members of staff. The quality manager and her team are responsible for quality of training within its subcontractors. Government funds NTN's entry training provision.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Deavon Baker-Oxley HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and five additional inspectors, assisted by the Quality Manager as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all of the provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	
Grade 1	Outstanding	
Grade 2	Good	
Grade 3	Requires improvement	
Grade 4	Inadequate	

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012

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