

# Mobile Care Qualifications Limited

## Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		14–18 January 2013
Overall effectiveness	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Good-2</b>
	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement-3
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

### Summary of key findings for learners

#### This provider is good because:

- A high proportion of learners gain qualifications, obtain promotions at work and go on to further study.
- Assessors have good levels of professional experience and expertise that they use effectively to support and develop learners.
- Assessors and managers work together, setting high standards and aspirations for learners.
- Particularly strong partnerships widen the learning experience.
- All staff fully support the strategic direction and mission of the organisation. They work actively and effectively with senior managers in meeting the needs of learners.
- Operational management is much improved. Managers make good use of data and are directly improving teaching, learning and assessment.

#### This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Too many apprentices fail to complete in the planned time period.
- Arrangements for learners to gain support for functional skills take too long in some cases.
- Trainers and assessors do not promote equality and diversity consistently or meaningfully, particularly in reviews.

## Full report

### What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that more apprentices complete their programmes on time by monitoring their progress and intervening with extra support, including more use of e-learning, when apprentices show signs of falling behind.
- Develop a more systematic process that will automatically trigger functional skills support for learners. Review the way support is given to learners so that a range of materials and training is available for them.
- Train assessors about the challenges to equality and the benefits of diversity in the workplace so that they can be more confident and consistent about promoting equality and diversity to learners in reviews and training activities.

### Inspection judgements

<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	Good
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- Overall success rates have improved steadily for three successive years and are at national averages. The rate that learners achieve qualifications within planned timescales has improved significantly over this same period. Outcomes for care apprentices and adults on care workplace programmes, who represent the largest proportion of learners at Mobile Care Qualifications Limited (MCQ), are good. A high proportion of learners gain promotion at work, receive additional payments, or go on to further study.
- Administration and childcare learners' progress through their programmes has been slow, with not enough apprentices gaining their qualifications within the planned timescales, but this is improving. The majority of learners across the provision make good progress from low starting points.
- Apprentices and workplace learners develop good skills that they use regularly at work and in home life. For example, learners in health and care research health-related topics such as dementia very well and use the information to understand their residents' behaviour. Administration learners prepare staff rotas for their workplaces and childcare learners develop the skills to create interesting games for the children in their care.
- Learners across programmes are developing good team-work skills, with some taking on tasks that demonstrate their ability to work independently and show initiative. Employers greatly value their contributions with some commenting favourably on improvements they bring to their businesses.
- Learners complete additional useful elements of learning, as well as their main qualification that help them understand wider roles at work and take on additional responsibilities. Learners develop an understanding of English and mathematics at an appropriate rate, although for some learners progress in this area has been slow.
- Managers scrutinise information to understand achievement gaps for learners and have taken good actions to address these, including reviewing and changing support for people from minority ethnic groups. They have been particularly successful in ensuring younger apprentices achieve their qualifications within planned timescales, raising these rates from well below the rates the remainder of the learners were achieving to well above.
- Although most gaps have narrowed significantly, learners with learning difficulties and disabilities are not gaining their qualifications within their planned timescales at the same rate as other learners.

**The quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good overall, which is reflected in the good outcomes for learners. Staff are enthusiastic, well-qualified and have good occupational knowledge that they use successfully to engage learners. In health and care, assessors use good questioning techniques and learning activities to motivate learners who respond positively to their attention. Reviews of learning and planning for subsequent activities are good.
- A minority of other learners, including administration learners, have not benefited sufficiently from this range of activities and frequency of visits although these have improved significantly recently.
- Assessors provide good one-to-one coaching that meets individual needs very effectively. Apprentices benefit from regular workplace visits, often in unsociable hours, sometimes supplemented through their e-portfolios and other online materials. While assessors use these information and learning technologies to a limited extent, all learners are not benefiting sufficiently from their wider use.
- Apprentices and workplace learners have access to a good range of additional group sessions held in the three centres around the region as well as those organised on employers' premises. These sessions are well-planned with a good range of activities to engage learners. Topics include equality and diversity, safeguarding, moving and lifting, dementia awareness, fire safety and data protection.
- Learners benefit from a thorough induction process. Individual learning plans outline initial assessment information clearly and subsequent action plans ensure learners understand the next steps they have to take to achieve in their agreed timescales. Ongoing assessment in workplace provision is thorough and well-planned with good feedback that learners value and understand.
- Induction and initial assessment arrangements for administration and some childcare learners have been weak but have improved recently with the use of good online materials.
- Reviews of progress are generally good and allow learners time to reflect on how well they are doing and to assess what further actions they need to take. However, some target-setting in reviews does not always challenge learners or explain in plain English what tasks need to be completed, quoting instead the numerical reference in the qualification.
- Learners receive good, detailed feedback from assessors. They have a good understanding of what they have to do to improve and successfully use this information with their employers to devise further training at work and at home that extends their skills and knowledge.
- All learners now undertake a sound initial assessment for functional skills through the good online process MCQ has developed. The results of this are sensitively fed back to them. Assessors and specialist staff give appropriate support when learners are identified as needing it. However, the process to identify and deliver support is not systematic enough to allow all learners to receive support in time for it to be fully effective.
- Trainers and assessors give good information, advice and guidance to learners within the bounds of their occupational knowledge that enables learners to understand their choices within the vocational area and sometimes beyond. Trainers and assessors are very accessible and supportive to learners. However, information for learners outside their occupational area is more limited.
- Learners have a reasonable understanding of equality and diversity. Health and care learners have a good awareness of equality and diversity in relation to their residents or children in their care but are less able to relate issues to their own lives. Administration learners' records and discussions show an adequate understanding. However, assessors do not always challenge learners' views or create enough opportunities to discuss more complex issues.

**Health and social care and childcare**  
**Apprenticeships**  
**Other work based learning**

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good, which matches the good outcomes for the significant majority of apprentices. Staff have high expectations for learners and motivate them through challenging assessment activities that encourage them to make good progress. A minority of learners on childcare courses are not yet making as much progress, although they are improving.
- Learners enjoy their programmes and are highly motivated to progress to the next level of study, with assessors making learning interesting and challenging. Staff make good use of additional training through group sessions in their training centres, in addition to that provided by employers, to enhance learning. For example, intermediate apprentices in Sunderland have completed an additional safe handling of medicine course before progressing to the advanced programme.
- Assessors are well-qualified and use a breadth of vocational experience to support learners fully. Assessors are particularly flexible and creative and they plan assessment activities thoroughly. For example, an assessor in childcare used the snowy weather conditions to explore the importance of risk assessment with a learner when planning an outdoor activity for children. Learners improve their work skills considerably and develop much increased confidence and knowledge.
- Staff provide good coaching for learners, encouraging them to make good use of their prior learning and current experience. This has been particularly effective in ensuring learners develop a greater understanding of their employers' policies as well as new ways of working. This enables learners to work more effectively in teams. Many employers comment on how this has improved standards of care in the workplace, for example, learners supporting care residents through stoma-care.
- Staff encourage learners to set challenging targets for their own learning. Detailed and constructive oral feedback and online recording enable learners to improve and successfully plan their next steps. Assessors and employers work collaboratively to monitor individual progress, providing additional support as required. For example, a school teacher was actively involved in reviewing a learner's progress and setting new targets.
- The majority of assessors use laptops and mobile internet access effectively to conduct research during coaching sessions, for example, to gain the latest information on employment legislation. However, not all assessors are proficient in using online methods for recording progress and planning learning and assessment. The majority of learners complete paper portfolios but would benefit from greater encouragement to make better use of electronic recording systems.
- Initial assessment is thorough and is used effectively to set individual targets which stretch and challenge learners. Learners' progress is closely monitored and additional support is provided where required. However, not all assessors correct spelling and grammatical errors in learners' written work, and support for improving learners' use of English and mathematics is not integrated sufficiently with wider assessment and learning opportunities. Resources generally are good.
- Staff have a good understanding of equality and diversity but do not always promote these when they meet with learners. Learners have a very good understanding of the importance of respect and dignity within care settings. However, broader issues relating to wider aspects of inequalities and differences in society, such as faith, race and gender, are not always explored sufficiently to help learners understand more about themselves and the wider society.

**Administration and customer service****Apprenticeships****Other work based learning**

Requires improvement

- The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement as do outcomes for learners. Assessors provide effective individual coaching for learners to help them develop their administration and customer service skills. They successfully motivate learners. However, in the early part of the programme learners had too few assessment visits and made slow progress. Some learners left early.
- Assessors are well-qualified and experienced and work effectively with individual learners to extend their knowledge. Learners have access to online learning resources and suitable workbooks to develop their skills and understanding. They improve their confidence and communication skills, for example, in dealing effectively with difficult customers.
- Reviews of learning are thorough and give learners adequate time to reflect on their progress. Assessors give learners particularly detailed feedback about their work and progress, using technology. Target-setting for assessment and at progress reviews is broadly good although insufficiently challenging for some learners.
- Apprentices benefit from access to a good range of additional group sessions held in the three training centres across the region. They are well-planned with a good range of activities designed to engage and motivate learners. They give wider coverage of topics such as safeguarding and allow learners time to understand some complex issues in a productive group setting. However, too few learners are able to access these sessions.
- Assessors use the new online resources very effectively to carry out initial assessment of learners' starting points. Learners now benefit from a wide-ranging summary of their prior achievements including mathematics, English and learning styles. Assessors make good use of the feedback to design personal programmes. However, for earlier learners initial assessment and induction were insufficiently effective and their progress has been slower.
- Overall, the planning, teaching and assessment of functional skills are weak. Assessors do not plan sufficiently to ensure learners can apply English and mathematics in different aspects of their training. The teaching and assessment of functional skills are not yet adequately integrated throughout the apprentices' programme.
- Assessment of learners' work is adequate and, where technology is used, such as digital recording, it is better suited to learners' needs. An e-portfolio gives learners instant access to a summary of their progress and opportunities to submit work independently. However, assessors and learners do not use this technology enough.
- Employers take an active part in the review process, contributing fully to the wider development of learners' skills. Assessors work effectively with employers to develop learners' understanding of equality and diversity and to make examples relevant to their workplace. However, assessors do not challenge learners sufficiently with more complex equality and diversity scenarios.

**The effectiveness of leadership and management**

Good

- Directors and senior managers provide good leadership and management and are ambitious to improve the provision further. The senior management team has a shared vision to provide high-quality training programmes that bring increased value to learners, employers and the wider community. Managers have a very good understanding of the core business within the care sector and have a good awareness of national training priorities. Morale is good within the highly motivated staff team.
- The organisation has recently restructured the way it manages and delivers training and assessment, resulting in significant improvements in success rates particularly for care apprentices. Managers fully recognise the need to tackle underperformance of staff to raise the

quality of the learners' experience, and have taken good actions to bring this about. MCQ uses data appropriately to monitor progress and manage performance.

- Managers have realistic plans for further development and improvement and remain on target to achieve their goals. Despite much success, managers recognise that success rates for a minority of apprentices need to improve further. They are also determined to improve support arrangements for functional skills and to ensure staff increase their confidence in the use of technology to support learning.
- MCQ has developed a rigorous approach to performance management, which is now firmly established and is resulting in good achievement for learners. This is conducted through monthly meetings by a senior manager with each staff member to monitor performance against key performance indicators through individual targets. This approach has successfully raised staff accountability for the achievement of company priorities and awareness of the part they can play in achieving them.
- Senior managers and staff have revised and strengthened the observation of teaching, learning and assessment system and this is improving their quality considerably. Inspectors agreed that the grading of observations is generally accurate. Reports are detailed and lead to identified action to support staff to develop their practice. MCQ works effectively with a network of local training providers to share good practice and benefit from good peer-review arrangements.
- Self-assessment arrangements are good. Managers and staff have detailed knowledge of the provision and meet regularly to review quality and effectiveness. They have accurately identified the strengths and areas for improvement in the provision and self-assessment grades match those awarded by inspectors. Staff meet regularly to review quality and effectiveness. The views of learners and employers are valued but arrangements to collect and analyse this information are too informal.
- MCQ has established good partnerships with employers and uses these effectively to improve outcomes for learners and to broaden the training activities for them. The company makes a valuable contribution to the local community by developing effective partnerships with other local training providers, the local authority and schools, to support disadvantaged young learners not in education, employment or training. Some of these young learners then progress onto mainstream programmes.
- Equality and diversity feature strongly in MCQ's mission statement and development plans. Recent actions to address underachievement for identified groups of learners have been largely successful. The diversity champion attends a local equality and diversity networking group and adequately passes on training and resources to staff. However, the promotion of equality and diversity during training and assessment visits with learners requires improvement.
- Arrangements to safeguard learners meet legislative requirements. Staff are diligent in promoting the welfare of learners and they work in partnership to make sure learners are fully protected. Learners have a good understanding of health and safety. Policies and procedures are reviewed regularly and thoroughly. Vetting arrangements for staff are effective and thorough risk assessments ensure suitable arrangements are in place to protect all learners in their workplaces.

## Record of Main Findings (RMF)

<b>Mobile Care Qualifications Limited</b>			
<b>Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance:</b>  1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	Apprenticeships	Other work-based learning
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	2	2	2
<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	2	2	2
<b>The quality of teaching, learning and assessment</b>	2	2	2
<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management</b>	2	2	2

<b>Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment</b>	<b>Grade</b>
<b>Health and social care</b>	2
<b>Administration</b>	3

## Provider details

<b>Mobile Care Qualifications Limited</b>	
<b>Type of provider</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Age range of learners</b>	16+
<b>Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year</b>	Full-time: 785
	Part-time: 0
<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Andrew Lister
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	January 2010
<b>Website address</b>	<a href="http://www.mcq.co.uk">www.mcq.co.uk</a>



<b>Provider information at the time of the inspection</b>								
<b>Main course or learning programme level</b>	<b>Level 1 or below</b>		<b>Level 2</b>		<b>Level 3</b>		<b>Level 4 and above</b>	
<b>Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)</b>	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
<b>Full-time</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Part-time</b>	n/a	1	n/a	24	n/a	10	n/a	n/a
<b>Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age</b>								
	<b>Intermediate</b>		<b>Advanced</b>		<b>Higher</b>			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
	48	306	11	338	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Number of learners aged 14-16</b>	n/a							
<b>Number of community learners</b>	n/a							
<b>Number of employability learners</b>	n/a							
<b>Funding received from</b>	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
<b>At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:</b>	No subcontractors							

## Additional socio-economic information

Mobile Care Qualifications Limited operates from three learning centres. These are in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Middlesbrough and York. Unemployment rates fluctuate around the area serviced by the provider. However, pockets of high unemployment and great deprivation can be found, particularly around Newcastle and in the Tees Valley area. In 2011/12, around 80% of learners were recruited onto care learning programmes.

## Information about this inspection

<b>Lead inspector</b>	June Cramman HMI
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One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and five additional inspectors, assisted by the managing director 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 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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