

North East Employment and Training Agency Limited

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		30 October – 2 November 2012
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement-3
	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement-3
Outcomes for learners		Requires improvement-3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		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 leave the programme without achieving their qualifications or do not achieve within the expected timescales.
- Not enough lessons are outstanding. Tutors do not make enough use of learning technology to enliven learning. Assessors and tutors do not sufficiently plan learning and assessment to meet individual needs.
- Targets in apprentices' reviews are not always sufficiently individualised or adequately monitored and followed up. Learner attendance is not sufficiently monitored to identify trends for individuals or groups of learners to ensure they attend for training regularly.
- Learners' broad understanding and application of equality and diversity is not sufficiently developed.
- Leaders and managers do not focus enough on developing outstanding teaching. Tutors are not provided with sufficient clear actions on how to improve their lessons, particularly where lessons are graded better than satisfactory.

This provider has the following strengths:

- A significant amount of good teaching and learning which develops apprentices' knowledge and understanding. Good teaching on employability programmes supports learners' personal and social development and increases confidence.
- Good workplace training from employers and well qualified and skilful tutors and assessors.
- Good assessment practices and pastoral support for learners.
- Good relationships with local employers to provide apprenticeships.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve overall success rates and the proportion of learners achieving within planned timescales, particularly for learners aged 16 to 18. Investigate the reasons why learners do not complete their programmes and work closely with employers to provide sufficient guidance to ensure that learners enrol on the right course.
- Work closely with employers to agree a designated training period in the workplace to ensure training is not delayed or impeded. Collect and analyse data on attendance in the training centres and in workplaces to ensure learners access sufficient training and assessment.
- Improve the proportion of outstanding lessons by ensuring that lesson observations lead to high-quality action planning and training. Support tutors and assessors through structured and regular training to become more reflective practitioners so that they recognise what they need to do to improve practice.
- Make better use of interactive technologies to enliven lessons, support assessment and to enhance workplace coaching sessions.
- Embed the performance measures already introduced to improve the use of learning plans and reviews to plan and monitor learner progress. Implement individual target-setting to drive learner progress to achieve within the planned time period. Improve differentiation during lessons to ensure all learners make progress and achieve their potential.
- Ensure tutors systematically, through lessons and reviews, develop and embed a thorough understanding by learners of equality and diversity
- Improve performance management by improved use of data and by ensuring staff understand organisational and individual targets to increase success rates and ensure learners achieve within expected timescales.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
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- Overall apprenticeship success rates in hair and beauty therapy improved steadily to national rates but declined in 2011/12 to below national averages. The proportion of apprentices achieving within planned timescales improved steadily to just above national rate in 2010/11 but declined in 2011/12 to below the national average.
- Although numbers of learners on the recently introduced barbering course are low, the success rate is close to the high national rate for this programme and all successful learners achieved within their expected timescale.
- Most apprentices make the progress expected of them when they started their learning programme. Many are able to take on high levels of responsibility at work and carry out tasks professionally and to employers' satisfaction. Most apprentices achieve high levels of theoretical understanding and are able to apply this understanding in the work place.
- North East Employment and Training Agency Limited (NEETA) is successfully addressing differences in the achievement of apprentices from different backgrounds. For example, gaps in achievement between the low numbers of male apprentices who achieve better than women and between adult learners who achieve better than learners aged 16 to 18 are closing. The very few learners from minority ethnic communities achieve well.
- Apprentices gain good technical skills underpinned by a thorough understanding of theory. They are able to perform tasks independently and confidently and they quickly make a significant contribution to their employers' salons. Some intermediate-level hair apprentices have their own

clientele, applying treatments to high standards and in commercial timescales normally associated with qualified hairdressers. Beauty therapy apprentices develop good skills in undertaking pedicures and eyelash extensions.

- Success rates on employability training programmes are high. Most learners attain the diploma in employability skills. All learners attain the award for information technology users. Learners following employability programmes develop high levels of self-confidence and self-esteem and are able to apply their new skills effectively in their lives.
- English and mathematics skills are supported well and developed throughout the programmes. Apprentices with literacy or numeracy needs are supported through effective functional skills sessions from well qualified and experienced tutors who set sessions in a vocational context to aid understanding. Learners on employability programmes receive high levels of support in mathematics, English and personal development which lead to significant advances in self-confidence.
- A high proportion of intermediate apprentices go on to follow advanced programmes with NEETA. Many apprentices increase their levels of responsibility in employers' salons commensurate with their increased skills.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment overall requires improvement. Although current learners are making satisfactory progress, too many apprentices have made slow progress and fail to achieve their qualifications. Not enough achieve their qualification frameworks within the planned end dates. The employability learners benefit from good learning experiences and, as a result, are better equipped to improve their lives and enter into work.
- Many taught lessons are good but none are outstanding. The better lessons are characterised by the good variety of teaching and learning activities which promote sustained learner motivation and involvement. Learners are challenged and respond well. Many tutors use skilful questioning to ensure learning is checked and reinforced. In some lessons, however, learning is not recapped sufficiently and learners are not clear about that they have achieved. The pace of the lessons is slow and learners become distracted and disengaged. Lesson plans are not consistently used well. Although tutors are observed regularly, action planning to make improvements lack depth and not enough good practice is shared.
- Resources are mostly good and provide learners with a good quality learning experience. However, in one of the training centres there are not enough beds for learners to practice beauty treatments. Tutors and learners have access to technology in the training centres and many learners display good computing skills where they routinely use the technology for research and to produce colourful and interesting work. However, not all tutors make sufficient use of the technology to enliven lessons.
- Hairdressing and beauty therapy learners receive good training from their employers. Assessors' individual coaching of apprentices in their workplaces is good. Learners are quickly able to make a good contribution in their salons and they work with confidence when carrying out client treatments. Assessment practices are good and learners benefit from the detailed feedback they receive from tutors. Assessors do not routinely use technology such as laptops in workplace visits to support coaching and assessment sessions. Learners have access to a good variety of clients to demonstrate their skills.
- Tutors are enthusiastic, well-qualified with good occupational knowledge that they use well to engage learners in training sessions. They act as good role models. Tutors ensure that they regularly update their technical and creative skills in the salons.
- Learners are positive about their training and the good development of their skills. They enjoy their learning sessions. However, learners' attendance is not analysed sufficiently to identify

trends for individuals or groups of learners to ensure they attend for training regularly. Retention of learners on the training programmes is improving.

- Learners do not plan and review their learning sufficiently to ensure they make progress quickly enough. Most learners do not have clear, measurable targets for improvement and the reviews are not always helpful to learners. Learners' workplace training is not always recorded in the plans or reviews. Appropriate targets are not always set or discussed in sufficient detail with employers. Tutors do not use the information sufficiently to ensure learners are making enough progress. Employability learners are set clear objectives which are well-recorded. However, short-term targets are insufficiently individualised. Recent improvements have been made to monitoring apprentices' achievements and current learners are making satisfactory progress.
- Apprentices with literacy or numeracy needs are supported through effective functional skills sessions. Employability learners receive high levels of support from their individual tutors who know their learners well. Although support for learners is good, NEETA does not have a formalised procedure in place for learners with severe difficulties or disabilities.
- The provider works well with a large number of employers in the area to provide good work placements for the apprentices. Many learners progress from the provider's successful 14 to 16 schools' programmes. Too many learners do not complete their programmes.
- Apprentices benefit from the good advice and guidance from their tutors across all programmes. They are helped in deciding what they can do to extend their learning and complement their skills and the services they can provide for clients. Employability learners, although they benefit from good pastoral support and gain good employability skills, do not generally have enough information on the next steps they can take to progress.
- Learners have a good understanding of health and safety. They relate this well to their work with clients in the salons and demonstrate good housekeeping routines in the training rooms. Although some tutors ensure that equality and diversity is discussed during their training and reviews, not enough learners have improved their understanding of these topics.

Hairdressing Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment are improving. NEETA is in the process of making significant changes to improve quality of provision; however, this has not yet impacted on improving success rates. In previous years, success rates have fluctuated above and below national averages, and present apprenticeship and advanced apprenticeship rates are low and below national averages as are the rates for those learners who complete their course within expected timescales.
- Learners develop good practical hairdressing skills early in their course, for example, when using rollers to set hair. Learners on barbering courses are particularly skilled when using clippers without attachments to cut short graduated hair styles and they are particularly confident when working with open cut-throat style razors to shave neck hairs.
- Workplace training is generally good and programmes are flexible to meet the needs of employers and learners. Some learners have all their training in the workplace and others attend the training centre. Trainers reinforce the training given by employers; however, some workplace training is interrupted due to learners not having a designated training time that allows them to take time out from their normal salon duties.
- Assessment is generally good and rigorous with most assessors using good questioning techniques to reinforce learning. Apprentices work in good hairdressing salons that enable them to benefit from the opportunity to practice their skills and assessments on a wide variety of clients and some intermediate apprentices manage their own clientele.
- Lessons at the training centres are generally good and lead to good skills development. For example, hair cutting skills are developed early in the course. However, in practical lessons

some learners remain inactive for too long whilst waiting for clients. In theory lessons, questioning is used well to check learning and learners use the internet effectively for research; however, trainers do not sufficiently use information technology to enhance lessons.

- Learners feel safe and enjoy their training in their salons and the training centres and speak highly of the support and guidance given by their trainers who have appropriate qualifications and act as good role models. There is an improving focus on the development of learners' employability skills such as client consultation and in meeting the expectations of employers.
- Learner progress reviews in the workplace are inconsistent but improving. Previously, reviews had broad targets with insufficient detail to drive learner progress. However, reviewers are now beginning to communicate well with learners and employers and targets set at reviews are improving and now focus on achievement of National Vocational Qualification units.
- English and mathematics skills that support learning goals are assessed at the start of the course and additional support is given by specialist teachers. Learners appreciate the way teachers relate these skills to their professional and social life, which promotes relevance and develops understanding.
- Equality and diversity are insufficiently promoted during learner progress reviews and lessons. Lesson planning is inconsistent. Opportunities to develop equality and diversity are identified; however, these are not always implemented during the lesson. In lessons where it naturally arises, issues relating to disability or ethnicity are not sufficiently focused upon by teachers to improve and promote learners awareness.

Beauty Therapy Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment reflect the need to improve the outcomes for learners on beauty therapy apprenticeship programmes. The company have made significant changes to improve quality of provision; however, this has not yet impacted on improving success rates. Outcomes last year declined significantly. They are considerably below national rates.
- Lessons at the NEETA training centre are satisfactory to good. In the best lessons there are clear links to learning that draw on previous knowledge and experience. Tutors do not use Information and Learning Technology ILT in lessons to enliven teaching and enrich the learning experience. Learners are confident to use computers independently. The standard of learners work is generally good. In particular learners develop good skills early in their course, for example, when undertaking pedicures and eyelash extension.
- Resources at the training centre in Newcastle are generally satisfactory and fit for purpose. However, there are insufficient numbers of beauty couches for the learners to work on. There is also insufficient space for the learners to move round the bed when working on clients.
- The assessment process is fair and rigorous and meets the awarding body requirements. Assessment planning is good. Learners are briefed well before the assessment and understand clearly the assessment criteria. Constructive feedback is given to develop learners understanding and encourage progress.
- There is good on-the-job flexible one to one training which meets individual learner and employer needs. Learners have fortnightly theory or practical learning sessions at their salons and progress well. Some of these sessions challenge and stretch the learners to move onto more advanced beauty treatments.
- Staff are well qualified and have good industrial experience. They make good use of their extensive knowledge to inspire learners. There are good opportunities for learners to achieve additional qualifications. For example, threading, waxing and more advanced facial techniques. Staff encourage and support learners to access these additional qualifications to enhance or extend learners' employability skills.

- The provider works with high quality committed employers. Many provide additional on-the-job training. The salon trainers are highly professional therapists who are good role models for the apprentices.
- The review process requires improvement. Tutors are motivational and encourage the learners to progress their learning. However, this is not reflected on the review form. Targets lack detail and learners are not given sufficient guidance about how they can achieve them. Equality and diversity issues are not reinforced during the review. Too many learners have only a vague understanding of the broader aspects relating to equality and diversity.
- Learners feel safe and enjoy their learning programme. Pastoral support is good. Learners speak highly of the support and guidance given by their tutors.
- English and mathematics that support learning goals are assessed at the start of the course and additional support is given to learners by specialist tutors. Learners appreciate the way tutors relate these skills to situations that they will encounter in their professional and social life. However, learner progress is impeded by poor attendance in some lessons.

Preparation for life and work Employability

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment on the employment training programme is good, attendance is excellent. Overall outcomes for learners are good and excellent for information and communication technology and functional mathematics. The embedding of English, personal and social development into the programme equips learners to advance their communication skills, which impacts positively upon confidence and self-esteem.
- Better lessons are well planned, learners fully engaged, have a high level of motivation and make good progress. Individualised support is efficient in enabling learners to complete their work. A variety of teaching, learning and assessment methods are employed and in one lesson the teacher used ILT effectively to encourage learners to discuss and raise questions about their work. Assessment was efficient, use of extension activities and the pace of lessons encourage motivation, good peer reviews, questioning and supported self-evaluation. Learners discussed and demonstrated the skills they have developed; there was a good level of independent learning. In one session the teacher used, and encouraged the group to use, techniques to support a partially deaf learner. The impact for the learner was an increase in confidence and a raised awareness of disability and inclusion for the group.
- In less successful lessons learners were on task throughout the session and outcomes were met. However, a restricted dialogue between the teacher and learners meant both progress and pace were slow. There was a limited degree of stretch and challenge, and few opportunities for checking learners' understanding and promoting independent learning. Equality and diversity was not promoted throughout these lessons.
- Learners receive high levels of support in mathematics, English and personal development. Learners who receive support improve in confidence are able to problem solve and make good progress through their programme. However, there is no formal strategy to outline and make staff aware of the processes for supporting learners with severe learning and physical disabilities.
- Inductions are well structured and include initial assessment and diagnostic testing which clearly identify learners starting points and support needs. Information from individual learning plans identifies career aspirations. Medium- and long-term target-setting and monitoring is individualised and supports learner achievement. However, short-term targets are not sufficiently individualised and only happen at group level within the more effective sessions. Learners' progress is captured during learner reviews at four-week intervals.
- Portfolios are set out clearly. Learners are actively involved in compiling portfolio evidence and have a good understanding of the purpose and content of their portfolios. Work is at the

required level for their ability. Errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar are addressed throughout and timely feedback is provided to support learners to make improvements to their work.

- During exit reviews there is insufficient advice given to learners regarding their next steps. Learners confidently express the skills developed and are able to relate their newly achieved skills to the real world and their personal development. One learner was able to shop by herself for the first time because she had improved her mathematics and gained in confidence.
- There is little promotion of equality and diversity embedded within teaching and learning sessions, reflecting the limited understanding learners have of this topic. Learners have a good understanding of health and safety and are treated with respect by teachers and peers and feel safe.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership and management of the NEETA programmes require improvement. Performance on all courses overall improved until 2011/12 when success rates declined below national rates. The teaching, training and assessment provided for apprentices at NEETA are satisfactory to good but there are insufficient examples of outstanding teaching.
- Feedback following internal lesson observations does not sufficiently result in focused action planning and staff development to drive outstanding teaching. Lessons graded good or better often result in minimal action plans. The observation and standardisation process does not sufficiently identify good practice and ensure this is shared effectively between tutors to promote improvement.
- Leaders and managers have taken effective steps to improve provision since the last inspection. There has been significant investment in improving premises and resources for learners. Retention has significantly improved in 2012. Teaching and learning are improving but there is not yet enough outstanding teaching and teachers do not use advanced technologies sufficiently well to enliven learning and stimulate learners. Success rates declined in 2011/12. Many management initiatives are too new to judge the impact.
- Arrangements for safeguarding meet the legislative requirements. The designated safeguarding officer receives regular updates through networks with other organisations and from the local safeguarding board. Information is shared adequately with colleagues. All staff have received training in safeguarding and appropriate Criminal Records Bureau checks are in place.
- NEETA has suitable policies and procedures for equality and diversity in place. Arrangements to monitor and deal with bullying and harassment are well understood by learners. However, tutors do not sufficiently integrate current equality and diversity topics very effectively into learning sessions to extend learners' understanding. More than one-third of apprentices have been identified as having additional learning and/or social support needs and receive good pastoral support to help them succeed. NEETA monitors the progress of different groups of apprentices well and has started to close the achievement gap between learners aged 16 to 18 and adults and between men and women.
- The self-assessment process includes sufficient consideration of the views of staff, apprentices and employers. The annual staff conference is used effectively to involve staff in meaningful discussions informing self-assessment. Learner and employer views are collected effectively through periodic questionnaires and through focused discussions at reviews. Views are analysed and acted upon and have led to improvements in resources available to learners, for example, in the provision of hairdryers and straighteners and in improved access to computing facilities. The learner and employer engagement strategy is generally effective. However, NEETA does not sufficiently inform employers or learners of the actions taken on their behalf to improve provision.

- The latest self-assessment report is largely accurate but fails to recognise the impact of the recent decline in success rates. The associated quality-improvement plan is reviewed regularly and progress noted, but many of the actions are too new to judge their impact. The quality of the provision overall has not improved sufficiently since the last inspection.
- The range of learning programmes meets the needs of the hairdressing and beauty therapy employers NEETA serves. The company provides apprentices with good skills and a thorough understanding of theoretical concepts to enable them to make a contribution to their employers' salons. All apprentices have employed status and many take on responsible tasks within their salons.
- The introduction of the employability training programme in January 2012 has been highly successful. The coordination and management of the programme is good and success rates on the main qualification and the supporting award in information technology are high. The programme is highly successful in motivating participants to re-engage in learning and in improving their employability skills and job prospects.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

North East Employment and Training Agency Limited

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	Apprenticeships	Employability
Overall effectiveness	3	3	2
Outcomes for learners	3	3	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	3	3	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	3	3	2

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Hairdressing	3
Beauty Therapy	3
Employability training	2

Provider details

North East Employment and Training Agency Limited

Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 118
	Part-time: 85
Principal/CEO	Susan Briganti
Date of previous inspection	April 2011
Website address	www.neeta-ltd.co.uk

Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)								
Full-time	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Part-time	0	28	0	45	0	12	0	0
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age								
	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	48	26	6	37	0	0		
Number of learners aged 14-16	84							
Number of community learners	N/A							
Number of employability learners	10							
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							

Additional socio-economic information

NEETA offers apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships in hairdressing and beauty therapy and employability training in the North East. The percentage of pupils in the local area gaining five or more A* to C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and mathematics is 2% below the national average. Unemployment is 2% above the national average. The proportion of the local population who have no qualifications is 12.2%, which is 1.3% more than nationally. Almost 49% hold qualifications at advanced level or above, 4% below the national average. The main employment in the local area is in health and social work activities and in wholesale and retail trade industries.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector	Bob Busby HMI
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One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four 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 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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