

Careers Yorkshire and the Humber Ltd

National Careers Service contractor

Inspection dates		29 July – 2 August 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-3
Outcomes for learners		Requires improvement-3
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:

- The attendance and punctuality of customers attending advice sessions have improved since the last inspection and are now, along with waiting times for appointments, adequate.
- Customers make good progress in developing their employment prospects and training opportunities.
- Customers develop and improve their motivation, confidence and self-esteem.
- Highly focused advice sessions challenge customers very effectively.
- Good encouragement is given to customers to identify their personal attributes and transferable skills.
- Well-qualified and very experienced advisers provide good support for customers.
- Very good distribution of the service throughout the region meets customers' needs.
- Clear strategic direction successfully supports national and local priorities.
- Subcontractors are set appropriately challenging targets and the monitoring of their performance is robust.
- Very good training and development activities are provided to staff to improve their effectiveness.
- Comprehensive quality-improvement systems have been developed since the last inspection.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- The number of customers gaining positive outcomes requires improvement.
- Achievement of positive outcomes between different groups of customers is too variable.
- The amount of independent activities and actions for customers to complete between advice sessions are insufficient.
- The compilation and recording of skills action plans are not always of a good enough quality.
- Target-setting and monitoring are not yet effectively being used to engage with priority groups.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Increase the number of customers that achieve a positive outcome of education, training or employment within six months of their final advice session to further enhance the good quality teaching, learning and assessment provided. Set and monitor improvement targets to narrow achievement gaps between different groups of customers.
- Increase the number of customers being contacted to provide a larger sample for following-up outcomes and satisfaction following advice sessions.
- Continue to regularly monitor and improve customers' attendance and punctuality across all subcontractors. Continue to monitor and improve the time that customers wait for appointments to a maximum of five days or less. Monitor the amount of customers attending advice sessions more than three times and make sure that this does not have a negative impact on appointment waiting times.
- Observe and monitor more customer advice sessions to improve the minority of sessions where customers are given insufficient information about the service. Ensure that, when appropriate, customers are given independent activities and actions to complete between sessions when they attend on more than one occasion. Place more importance on the need for customers to identify their own barriers to learning and employment and suggesting ways for overcoming them.
- Provide training for a minority of advisers in how to effectively capture and record customers' information to improve advisers' knowledge of customers and to reduce the time it takes during sessions. For a minority of advisers, provide training to improve the quality and usefulness of the skills action plans. Emphasise the use of concise bullet-pointed sentences, particularly where customers' literacy levels are low.
- Increase the awareness of Jobcentre Plus advisers about the purpose of the National Careers Service and what it can offer to customers.
- In a minority of sessions improve the promotion of appropriate training courses, where customers with qualifications below level 2 would benefit from accessing training to improve their functional skills. Ensure that advisers routinely check whether customers can access and manage their email account proficiently if this facility has been set up for them by advisers.
- Update the self-assessment report and ensure that data are used more clearly and succinctly to make judgements. Make the report less descriptive and more evaluative with clear evidence-based judgements.
- Careers Yorkshire and the Humber (CYH) should carry out joint observations of advice sessions with subcontractors to check the reliability of the judgements and the accuracy of the grades.
- Identify in the strategic plan the aim to widen the participation of identified priority groups and include targets in the development plan to monitor success against the targets.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The number of customers going into employment, further education or training has improved since the last inspection in what have been difficult times for the region and for the local economy. However, although the percentage is slightly above the contracted target, it still requires improvement. ▪ The majority of customers are followed up by an independent research company employed by CYH to enquire about their satisfaction levels, employment status and progression into further education or training. However, not all customers are followed up and less than half of those customers whose details are passed on by CYH for following up are able to be contacted. 	

- Achievement gaps exist between different groups of customers. A higher proportion of men gain employment than women and some minority ethnic groups are less successful in gaining employment than other groups. Although CYH is aware of the achievement gaps, no plans have been formulated about how to narrow and improve the gaps.
- Attendance and punctuality of customers at advice sessions have improved since the last inspection and are now broadly adequate and are continuing to improve at most subcontractors' venues. Effective strategies are in place to improve attendance further such as sending reminder text messages and making 'phone calls the day before appointments. Customers' waiting times for appointments with advisers have improved since the last inspection and are now acceptable. Subcontractors have improvement targets for customer attendance and waiting times that are regularly and effectively monitored by CYH as part of the quality monitoring processes. A minority of customers attend more than the three sessions associated with priority groups and are comprehensively supported. However, this adds to advisers' workload.
- Most customers make good progress in developing skills and understanding what they need to do to progress their training opportunities and employment prospects. They gain a better understanding of key aspects such as how to apply for work and in producing curriculum vitae (CV). They gain a better awareness of the options available to them and how they can achieve their aims and ambitions.
- Good progress is made in improving customers' confidence and self-esteem, and in addressing any anxieties about their future prospects. Customers are often encouraged to consider self-employment which can emanate from their interests and hobbies. This often helps to provide fresh stimulus and improved motivation for customers.
- Many customers improve their computing skills and become proficient in computerised job searches and in producing high-quality CVs as a result of the advice sessions.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
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- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good; however, this is not reflected in outcomes for customers which require improvement.
- The majority of advice sessions are good. Customers are fully informed about the National Careers Service confidentiality and data protection. Sessions are proficiently planned to ensure maximum use is made of the available time and that customers' short-, medium- and longer-term targets are clearly identified. Customers are skilfully challenged and motivated by advisers who encourage them to progress as quickly as possible.
- In a minority of sessions, however, customers are not given sufficient information about the service or enough independent activities to complete between sessions when they attend for more than one. Sessions are insufficiently planned and lack coherence. Insufficient importance is placed on the need for customers to identify their own barriers to learning and employment and to suggesting ways for overcoming them. Capturing and recording of customers' personal information takes too long.
- Advisers are well qualified, experienced in careers guidance and adept at working with a wide range of customers from different backgrounds. Many have a very broad range of coaching skills which they use to good effect when helping customers. These include active listening, questioning, clarifying, précising and summarising.
- Many advisers make very good use of resources such as a variety of interesting and professionally produced paper-based resources to help customers improve their CV and covering letters. Most customers who require CVs and covering letters receive good advice about content and formatting. As a result of the good guidance that they receive, they also identify their personal attributes and transferable skills which can further enhance their employability prospects.
- Information provided to customers, for example about possible funding for training programmes, is relevant, accurate and up to date. Promotion of the telephone helpline, website

and the lifelong learning account by advisers is usually good. Most advisers are particularly empathic, especially when they have had similar life experiences to their customers such as a change in personal circumstances or redundancy. Customers find this very reassuring.

- Most advisers usually have a good knowledge of local labour markets and existing skills shortages which they use effectively when advising customers about possible employment opportunities. They also have a good knowledge of external organisations which can offer specialist help with, for example, personal problems and housing issues.
- Although links with Jobcentre Plus advisers are good, some customers referred by them are unclear about the National Careers Service and what it can offer to customers. Many customers who are referred by Jobcentre Plus advisers attend the first session without knowing what is on offer to them. They are very pleased when they discover what the service can provide.
- Skills action plans vary in quality and usefulness. Not enough use is made of concise bullet-pointed sentences, especially important where customers' literacy levels are low. They do not always accurately record what has been discussed in sessions. In some sessions they take too long to complete because advisers' inputting skills are insufficiently developed, preventing them from inputting information while maintaining eye contact with, and talking to customers.
- English, mathematics, and information and communication technology skills are positively promoted by many advisers who confidently recommend customers who do not have qualifications at level 2 to enrol on appropriate training programmes. However, in a minority of cases this does not happen even when it is apparent that customers' chances of obtaining employment would be enhanced if they improved their functional skills. When customers do not have an email address it is usually created for them and advisers do not routinely check whether they can access and manage their account proficiently.
- Waiting times for appointments vary but most customers are seen within five days or less. Good attempts are made to improve attendance rates by contacting customers by 'phone or by text message on the day before their appointment. Customers who do not attend are promptly followed up to ascertain the reason for non-attendance and to offer them another appointment.
- Distribution of the service throughout the region is very good. Accommodation ranges from private, confidential offices to large open-plan areas that can be noisy and lacking in privacy although advisers are sometimes given the opportunity to use a small private office if customers require privacy. Community venues and purpose-built centres are particularly welcoming and safe.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- CYH have developed a clear strategic direction for the National Careers Service provision, which supports national and local priorities. The individual expertise of board members is utilised fully to inform and shape the strategic direction. Good partnership links with stakeholders very effectively inform the planning of the service. The provider has successfully developed a good operational working relationship with a range of subcontractors to provide a wide geographical coverage throughout the region. Clear direction is provided to subcontractors with appropriate targets for participation and progression. Provision is available in a variety of suitably located community venues. Co-location with Jobcentre Plus is productive and good working relationships are in place.
- Targets set for subcontractors are suitably challenging. Monitoring of performance is robust, with well-planned, regular and routine quality checks taking place. Data on the contract performance of subcontractors are collected weekly with a detailed monthly report being used very effectively to performance manage the provision. Underperforming providers are identified early with actions plans being agreed on what improvements need to be made. However, the formal recording of positive outcomes needs to improve.
- Management information is comprehensive and includes performance data from all areas of the provision. Data analysis is used very effectively to monitor performance and identify weaker

providers to target resources. The board receives detailed quarterly reports to assess the quality and performance of provision which enables it to successfully support and challenge the senior management team.


- Staff development opportunities are very good. Well-planned mandatory and optional training complements and supports training taking place within each subcontractor. A wide range of training courses are available to develop advisers' skills in working with a range of customers with complex and diverse needs such as asylum seekers and customers who have mental health problems. Continued professional development to maintain and further develop the skills of advisers is fully recorded and monitored. Evaluation of the impact of training and feedback from advisers effectively informs training and development events.
- Customers are generally supported by advisers with their literacy and numeracy during advice sessions. Since the previous inspection a Skills for Life strategy has been developed and introduced to ensure that advisers have a consistent approach to support. Recent training has focused on the provision and development of advisers' understanding of functional skills. However, in a minority of sessions the promotion of functional skills is insufficient.
- The self-assessment process is good. The process forms part of the overall quality improvement process which is inclusive and understood by staff. Good systems are in place to collect feedback from users, which informs the resulting report. The current self-assessment report is in need of updating. It is largely descriptive and makes insufficient use of the existing data to more clearly and succinctly support the judgements. The resulting development plan is clear and used at team meeting to judge progress in meeting identified objectives. Most of the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection have been resolved.
- Comprehensive and thorough quality improvement systems have been developed and introduced since the previous inspection. Quality assurance systems are clear, easily accessible and fully understood by staff. Variation in the compliance and quality of service are identified swiftly to enable speedy and targeted interventions. Observations to establish the quality of advisers' sessions take place at least on an annual basis and observation reports and action plans are subjected to an internal moderation process. However, CYH does not carry out any joint observations to check the reliability of the judgements and accuracy of the grades. The results of observations are effectively used to inform performance reviews and the planning of training.
- The promotion of equality and diversity throughout the service at an operational level is generally good with CYH engaging difficult to target groups within the communities in which they work. However, widening participation is not identified as part of the strategic plan and targets to improve participation from identified priority groups are not within the overall development plan. Training in equality and diversity is mandatory for advisers with optional training to extend their understanding. Training is effective at helping prepare advisers for working with a wide range of customers with diverse needs. Advisers have a good understanding of equality and diversity and are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Variation between positive outcomes for different groups of customers as identified by CYH needs to be resolved.
- CYH is meeting its statutory obligations to safeguard its customers. Regular staff training takes place which includes an online training package. The safeguarding requirements are clearly outlined in the service level agreement for subcontractors and are checked by CYH staff. CYH also carries out appropriate health and safety risk assessments in the variety of community venues where its service is provided.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

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

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
National Careers Service	2

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Full-time	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Part-time	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
Number of customers	23,133							
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Aspire-I ■ C & K Careers ■ Workwise ■ Igen ■ DISC ■ Swarthmore Education Centre ■ Unite the Union ■ East Riding of Yorkshire Council ■ Best Training Limited ■ Carlton Education ■ Ib2k Limited 							

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- North East Lincolnshire Council
 - Prospects
 - Barnsley MBC
 - Sheffield Futures
 - Babcock
 - BSD
 - Carers Resource
 - Next Generation

Additional socio-economic information

The region of Yorkshire and the Humber is made up of four sub-regions, North Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire and the Humber. The 2011 Census showed that Yorkshire and the Humber had 5,283,700 residents. It covers 15,420 square kilometres and the population density in mid-2010 was 344 people per square kilometre. The population density varies widely from 36 people per square kilometre in Ryedale, North Yorkshire to 3,700 in Kingston upon Hull. The main centres of population are Hull, Sheffield, Leeds and Bradford. More than 37% of the region's adult population are not qualified to level 2 and 89.6% of the population is classified as White, with the remaining 10.4% being ethnic minorities. Unemployment is 9.2% which is high compared to the national average for England of 7.8%.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

John Grimmer HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by the CYH 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 customers' progression rates to employment and learning to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews and telephone calls to gather the views of customers 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 all of the CYH National Careers Service provision.

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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