

CfBT Education Trust

National Careers Service contractor

Inspection dates		16–20 September 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-3
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Outstanding-1

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- The number of customers successfully contacted to check on their progress who achieve a positive outcome by enrolling on a learning programme or into employment is high.
- Customers develop good independent skills to assist them in their job search, improve their job applications and interview techniques.
- Advisers are very effective in developing and improving customers' self-esteem, confidence and self-awareness to improve their potential to achieve their goals and aspirations.
- Advisers provide good encouragement to customers that motivates them well to make progress, raise their aspirations and informing them of available opportunities although they live in areas of very high socio-economic deprivation and high rates of unemployment.
- CfBT provide a good range of group workshops covering topics relevant to customers. Advisers use these well to raise awareness of support such as the tools available on the National Careers Service website, as well as to encourage customers to review their own skills and job goals. Specific workshops are available for those facing redundancy.
- Leaders and managers work relentlessly and highly effectively, to monitor and raise standards. Leaders and managers are improving the provision and use challenging targets well, at all levels, to manage and monitor the quality of the service customers receive.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Not enough customers progress in their work.
- Too many customers do not attend their planned session.
- Not all group workshop sessions sufficiently enable or encourage customers to participate in their learning in an active way.
- In a small number of cases, advisers do not fully explore the deeper barriers of those who are long-term unemployed.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Increase the number of customers achieving a positive outcome with specific focus on raising the proportion moving into sustained employment and the total who progress in work.
- Take action to ensure that more customers attend their arranged meeting.
- Strengthen action planning for customers to ensure that all receive specific, measurable and achievable targets and goals.
- Increase the skills and confidence of advisers so they can better tackle the deep-rooted barriers of customers who have been long-term unemployed.
- Develop adviser's group delivery methods further so that they use a wider range of strategies to incorporate customers more actively in the sessions.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- According to the providers' internal data the proportion of customers followed up who progress into learning or training programmes is good and is well above the target rate. The proportion progressing into sustained employment also exceeds the target level and is good. The rate of progression in work is satisfactory. Nearly half of those entering learning or training access a programme related to English, mathematics or information and communication technology.
- Most advisers skilfully determine the starting points for customers. They identify, and take into account existing barriers for the individual customer to enable them to develop a meaningful skills action plan. However, in a few cases they do not fully explore the deep-rooted barriers for a customer with long-term unemployment.
- Most customers demonstrate high motivation levels to progress into training or employment. Using of a range of creative systems the provider captures and records progress and the impact of their interactions on customers.
- Excellent use of labour market information supports advisers' in their role. Newsletters, regular updates and frequent communications ensure both advisers and customers are made aware of local and regional job changes and opportunities. Creative approaches provide relevant job sector-specific information to customers which encourages them to think imaginatively when reviewing local and regional news and developments and the potential for employment.
- Most advisers are very effective in improving customer self-esteem, confidence and self-awareness to reduce their barriers to achieving their goals and aspirations. Punctuality to sessions is good, but instances where the customer does not attend their planned session are too many.
- Advisers make good attempts to develop customer independence and for them to take responsibility and be positive in meeting their goals and aspirations. They set tasks and actions with customers requiring them to complete them by the next session.
- Managers monitor and track the performance by the identified regional priority groups and they indicate that the only gap in achievement is for customers with learning difficulties and/or disability progressing into employment. They are developing specific actions to remedy this problem.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good as reflected in the judgment for outcomes. Improvements in the quality of the interactions with customers are clear and most customers are now making good progress.
- Advisers provide good encouragement to customers that motivates them well to make progress, raising their aspirations and informing them of available opportunities. Most customers are disaffected at the start of their sessions and live in areas of high socio-economic deprivation. Advisers challenge customer negativity well and provide good individual support. During sessions, customers become more confident in their future prospects and show good commitment to progress. Advisers promote follow-up sessions well.
- Advisers have good communication skills. They use very effective listening and questioning techniques to explore customers' current circumstances and options that best suit customers' needs. Advisers have good and relevant experience and use their substantial local knowledge well to raise customers' awareness of training and employment opportunities. Coaching by advisers in the development of curriculum vitae (CV) is good, and customers improve their knowledge and skills well, enabling them to take ownership and responsibility for their CV.
- Many group workshops are available and advisers use them well to raise awareness of support such as the resources available on the NCS website, as well as to encourage customers to review their own skills and job goals. Specific workshops are available for those facing redundancy. Customers enjoy the activities such as quizzes, but overall group interaction within the workshops is insufficient.
- The majority of individual sessions meet customers' needs well. Advisers effectively identify most of the customers' barriers to progression. However, advisers do not always sufficiently explore some of the deeper barriers, for example for those who are long-term unemployed.
- In most sessions, advisers use electronic and paper-based resources well to support customers in their aims. Advisers use a variety of good quality paper-based material to support learning in topics such as CV and interview techniques. The recent introduction of tablet computers has improved the sessions, giving the opportunity for customers to research relevant information, such as the NCS website job profiles, whilst the adviser types up the thorough record of the session.
- In the better sessions, customers are keen participants, contributing well to discussions and taking the lead in identifying their goals and setting actions to progress. However, in a minority of sessions, advisers take too much of a lead in discussions, and customers do not have sufficient opportunity to convey their views and plan their own progress. Advisers mostly record short-term actions well, to reflect the issues discussed in the sessions, such as CV development. However, action planning is often too narrow, insufficiently challenging, and in a minority of instances advisers do not encourage customers to take sufficient ownership of the required actions.
- The environments in which sessions take place are mostly welcoming, well equipped and provide a good learning opportunity.
- Advisers promote the development of English, mathematics and information and communications technology very well. They effectively assess customers skill levels and encourage them to access available support to help them progress. Advisers have a good awareness of local training providers and courses, and use this information very effectively to make customers aware of how they can improve these skills and the positive impact it will have on their job prospects.
- The provision of information and advice is good. Advisers give accurate, timely and impartial advice to customers, such as local labour market information, to raise awareness of job opportunities. Advisers use their good links with specialist agencies such as the probation

service, mental health support providers, and volunteer groups, as well as their knowledge of websites to point customers in the right direction for additional information and support.

- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. A wide range of venues is available for sessions, including in rural locations, to enable customers to access the careers support. During group and individual sessions, advisers promote equality matters well, ensuring that customers are aware that concerns, such as those about age, gender and disabilities will not affect their job search. Advisers demonstrate an empathetic and sensitive approach in working with customers from diverse backgrounds, including those with challenging needs, such as ex-offenders. The venues provide a safe environment for customers who become relaxed to discuss personal issues. However, advisers do not systematically raise customer awareness of safeguarding requirements.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leadership and management at CfBT are outstanding. Leaders and managers have an excellent and clear vision. They articulate this vision extremely well and all staff fully commit to it. They unite in purpose to provide the best service possible to customers. Because of the very high expectations, leaders and managers have consistently improved outcomes for customers even though facing significant socio-economic challenges in the region and the highest unemployment rate in the UK.
- Leaders and managers work relentlessly, and highly effectively, to monitor and raise standards. They focus extremely well on improving the provision and use challenging targets, at all levels, to manage and monitor the quality of the service for the customers. Staff at all levels are fully committed to, and involved in raising standards. As a result, outcomes have improved significantly since the previous inspection in 2010 and the start of this current contract.
- Leaders and managers monitor the provision rigorously and their use of management information to provide a clear picture of the provision is exceptional. A large number of reports are available, based on the wide range of data they collect. Managers use these reports very well for specific activities, for example using individual adviser reports to inform staff appraisal. Managers make extremely good use of customer views.
- Managers focus extremely well on actions to improve sessions. Leaders and managers use reports well to develop the performance of staff. Continuing professional development is frequent, including a very detailed four-week induction. Staff recognise and appreciate the benefits of the significant investment in their development. They are well qualified and experienced. Observations of staff performance are rigorous and largely accurate, and effective in improving the performance of advisers. Their findings match well those found on inspection.
- Managers monitor performance rigorously. They tackle under-performance robustly and with great integrity. For example, where managers judge a skills action plan does not meet the required standard, CfBT do not claim for that session allowing the customer another opportunity to receive funded advice and guidance. In addition, if customers do not maintain sustained employment then CfBT promptly refund the outcome bonus claimed.
- Leaders and managers work consistently to make best use of existing resources and develop new and innovative ones. For example, CfBT staff have developed applications to work on smart phones and tablet computers. These applications provide a range of services to staff and customers such as a 'help' application that staff can access with one touch if they feel at risk. Customers are also able to use other applications to give instant feedback on the effectiveness of the session they have just had.
- Managers' approach to quality assurance is excellent. Processes are clear and well defined. Managers have focussed well on improving the quality of observations of teaching, learning and assessment since the previous inspection. As a result, observations concentrate better on

outcomes and impact on the customer. However, this has not spread fully through the provision and in a small number of cases; the focus of the observation is too much on the process and advisers' activities.

- Self-assessment is rigorous and thorough and the self-assessment report is detailed and very accurate. Managers' use the input from customers well and while CfBT do not formally ask subcontractors for their views, they are highly effective at getting feedback from them during meetings and discussions.
- Managers' knowledge of the region and labour market is exceptional. Excellent use of the detailed labour market information ensures that provision is flexible and responsive to meet the changing needs of the North East of England. The focus on accessible provision is very strong. For example, managers and staff are developing provision for customers with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to meet this need.
- The range of provision is constantly under review to ensure it is current, resulting in many cases, outstanding impact on customers. For example, detailed analysis showed a gap between the number of sessions CfBT provided and the proportion of Jobcentre Plus claimants in Hartlepool. Managers acted quickly, and at some commercial risk, to develop capacity while simultaneously applying for a contract increase. Provision in this area has increased by 500%.
- Managers and staff work extremely well with local employers to help customers advised of, and at risk of redundancy. Advisers intervene as early as possible in these cases to help customers progress to other jobs or training. They use local knowledge and their extensive partnership networks extremely well to identify these needs.
- Staff at all levels promote equality and diversity well. Staff receive detailed and regularly updated training on these topics. All staff have a very good understanding of equality and diversity. Challenging targets for performance are set and the managers use the data well to identify any gaps in outcomes. Incidents and complaint are few, but managers deal with those that occur swiftly and effectively.
- CfBT keeps customers safe. It fulfils legislative requirements and staff receive appropriate training, which managers regularly update. Advisers focus well on safeguarding customers but do not always discuss safeguarding arrangements with them. They carry out checks of premises and work well with venue staff to deal with any potential risks that they identify.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

CfBT Education Trust

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

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

Provider details

Type of provider	National Careers Service contractor
Age range of customer	19+
Approximate number of all customers over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 0
	Part-time: 39,263
Principal/CEO	Steve Munby
Date of previous inspection	February 2010
Website address	www.CfBT.com

Provider information at the time of the inspection	
Number of customers	728
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"> ■ 2D ■ CEP Associates ■ DISC (Developing Initiatives Supporting Communities) ■ Exchange group ■ Ingeus Training Ltd ■ JET (Jobs Education Training) ■ Learning Concepts Ltd ■ North Tyneside Council ■ South Tyneside TEN ■ The Hope Foundation.

Contextual information

CfBT are the prime contractor for the National Careers Service in the North East. This includes County Durham, Tees Valley, Tyne & Wear and Northumberland. Although these regions include some prosperous areas, they also include some areas that score very highly on the indices of socio-economic deprivation. Unemployment in the region is the highest in the UK. In the region, 11.8% of the population have no qualifications and numbers receiving job seekers allowance is 50% more than the national figure. Pupils leaving school with five or more GCSE's at A*-C including English and mathematics are below the national figure.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Tim Gardner HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by the head of national careers service 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' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used interviews and telephone calls to gather the views of customers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed a range of learning sessions and activities. 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.

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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