

Tribal

National Careers Service contractor

Inspection dates		16–20 September 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
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:

- The large majority of customers successfully contacted by Tribal use the information, advice and guidance they receive to progress to training, learning or work.
- Most customers with significant barriers to employment improve their English, mathematics and employability skills.
- Customers progress well towards their career and employment goals because of well-qualified and informed advice.
- The best advisers help customers understand the links between good functional skills and sustainable, local employment.
- The outstanding programme of professional development helps advisers develop their skills, share good practice and supports them in acquiring appropriate qualifications.
- Managers ensure provision is responsive to the needs of individuals, harder-to-reach groups, and to the local and national priorities.
- Managers maintain a constructive network with a broad range of local and regional organisations, colleges and training providers.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- The rate of progression into sustainable employment and learning needs to be higher for a minority of groups.
- Attendance at a small minority of centres is low.
- Too few information, advice and guidance sessions are outstanding.
- A few advisers do not make clear links between Functional Skills and specific job roles.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Increase the number of customers progressing into sustained employment or learning, particularly customers over fifty and those with disabilities.
- Further develop good practice to improve attendance levels in some Jobcentre and probation service offices.
- Ensure all customers take responsibility for their action plans and develop the skills necessary to carry out effective job searches.
- Improve accommodation and access to confidential areas in a small minority of centres, so that all customers benefit from taking part in advice and guidance sessions in the setting most appropriate to their needs.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- The number of customers contacted, progressing into learning and training opportunities or into employment is above the target level. The number of customers making progress in work is below the target level. According to the providers' internal data, the proportion of customers it successfully follows up to monitor their progress is just over 50%.
- Most customers make at least the progress expected of them during their sessions, with the majority making good progress. Advisers are skilled in identifying customers' starting points, their barriers to employment and any relevant previous experience. Nearly all customers spoken to by inspectors or contributed to Tribal surveys improve their confidence and motivation.
- Attendance at the large majority of centres is good and improving. Staff monitor customers who fail to attend meticulously and use data very effectively to identify locations where attendance is poor. Better communication and partnership working and a greater flexibility in working arrangements has improved significantly some poorly performing Jobcentre Plus offices. Recent data shows that in most Jobcentre Plus offices the large majority of customers now keep their appointments. Attendance in a minority of probation venues remains low. The proportion of customers taking up the option of a second or third advice session is improving and now exceeds the contractual expectation.
- Most customers develop a positive outlook on learning and training because of the skilled advice and guidance from advisers. The large majority of customers have significant barriers to learning and sustainable employment with less than a third having qualifications above level two. Customers with low level qualifications, poor skills training or negative experiences of education feel encouraged and in many cases inspired to try and improve their English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Most customers want to move out of the cycle of unemployment, but do not have the confidence to return to education or awareness of options available to them. The positive experiences customers have with Tribal advisers gives them hope and practical solutions.
- Although the self-assessment report states that, there are no significant disparities in the performance of the different and diverse group, more female customers and those from minority ethnic groups gained positive outcomes and sustainable employment compared with other groups. The groups that achieved the lowest progression into work are customers aged 50 and above and those with disabilities.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Individual advice sessions are good. The good support and advice contributes to the high number of customers who progress towards their career and employment goals. Staff personalise advice to meet customers' specific needs. Advisers are adept at motivating and encouraging customers to identify their personal skills and qualities and developing employability skills to increase chances of employment.
- Advisers are well qualified and benefit from good professional development ensuring they maintain current knowledge and advisory skills. Advisers practice good communication and appropriate empathy with customers. The skilful use of open and probing questions establishes customers' priorities and needs. Exploration of previous experience, qualifications and potential barriers to learning and work advisers use well to negotiate short and long-term goals. In most sessions, advisers motivate customers well and they leave sessions with enthusiasm about progressing towards new career goals. However, in the least successful sessions unrealistic aspirations and negative perceptions about progressing to learning or employment advisers do not challenge.
- Advisers give high regard to confidentiality in sessions and they quickly establish a rapport with customers. Customers relax and readily disclose their concerns and needs, including their perceived barriers to progression into further learning and work. Most customers are able to speak to their advisers in confidence in comfortable, suitable accommodation. However, a minority of sessions take place in locations where advisers do not ensure customers have sufficient privacy.
- Good, practical use is made of on-line resources, including the National Careers Service (NCS) website, to support customers learning and development in sessions. Customers benefit strongly from the good promotion of tools, techniques and further support to encourage independent job search, including the NCS telephone helpline. The better sessions are highly engaging and customers are excited about taking their next career steps. Customers develop independence, make good progress in making decisions, and are motivated to take responsibility for their own progress. However, in a few instances advisers do not let customers fully engage in the session or allow them to develop and work towards their action plans and targets sufficiently.
- Most advisers help customers overcome their barriers to employment by making very good use of local support agencies and resources. Advisers show sensitivity and offer practical support to remove barriers to learning or employment to customers with mental health conditions. Advisers working for one probation service are particularly effective in using their knowledge and expertise to guide colleagues unfamiliar with working with customers covered by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- Advisers provide good constructive and practical feedback on customers' curriculum vitae (CV) and this helps them to improve and make progress. Customers access continuing support from advisers through email and telephone between sessions. Advisers improve customers' chances of employment by helping them to personalise their covering letters and by encouraging them to target their CVs to current vacancies. The promotion of volunteering is good, particularly when customers have had long periods of unemployment.
- Advisers sensitively use a range of methods to assess customers' levels of English, mathematics and ICT skills and make prompt and effective referral to local provision for assessment and support. Customers value the opportunity to improve their skills, which improves their confidence. The best advisers make the links between good functional skills and sustainable, local employment very clear, using imaginative strategies to assist customers in overcoming their initial fears of committing to further learning. Use of learndirect providers or in a few cases subcontractors own English, mathematics or ICT provision is good.
- In most sessions, advisers use their knowledge of the local labour market well, including current and forthcoming vacancies, and provide accurate advice regarding local employers'

requirements. For example, in one session the adviser was able to describe clearly the levels of English and mathematics required for a local employer.

- Advisers' interactions with clients strongly promote equality and diversity. Customers access a good range of venues through direct and subcontracted provision. The strong network of subcontractors and partners ensures that customers receive advice from advisers with specialist expertise to meet their needs, for example, those who working with offenders and customers who have been out of the job market for a considerable time. Advisers are non-judgemental and retain a positive encouraging manner in spite of difficult situations and complex barriers that customers declare.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Tribal NCS successfully achieves its mission to provide high quality, impartial careers information and advice that enable individuals to move on in work, learning and life. Leaders and managers ensure that the organisation successfully responds to regional and national priorities. Strong cooperation between the prime contractor and subcontractors supports the setting and achieving of ambitious participation and progression targets across a wide geographical region and diverse customer base to improve the prospects for customers. Managers maintain a constructive and valuable network with a broad range of local and regional organisations such as local councils, regeneration teams, enterprise partnerships, colleges and training providers.
- Leaders and managers within Tribal have thorough and effective quality assurance and review systems in place. Highly effective systems enable managers to track and monitor the performance of subcontractors. They maintain the quality of provision through constructive and reflective monthly reporting and quarterly review meetings. Effective and flexible collection and reporting of data aid the making of decisions and the development of policies.
- A very high proportion of customers take the opportunity to feedback valuable information to managers reflecting their views on the quality of advice and guidance they receive. Almost all indicate that sessions are valuable in helping to develop a sense of direction, building self-esteem, increasing confidence and developing a sense of purpose. The self-assessment report and quality improvement plan accurately identifies the key strengths and areas for improvement. Most staff contribute to the wider quality review process, but not all are fully aware of the self-assessment report's main points.
- Tribal's senior executives carry out effective governance. They make appropriate checks and oversee the quality and financial security of the provision and to ensure the national careers service contract complements the wider portfolio of Tribal's work.
- Management of staff performance supports and promotes the values of the service. Managers use information from observations and evaluations to monitor the performance of staff, improve the experience of customers and meet contractual targets. Detailed individual professional development plans identify broader staff development themes, which managers routinely incorporate into the detailed and broad-ranging training plan for the workforce.
- The culture of supporting advisers and promoting continuous professional development is particularly strong. Advisers are well qualified, highly professional and have good knowledge of local and regional training and labour market opportunities. All advisers have, or are working towards appropriate careers guidance qualifications. They use good interpersonal and communication skills to provide an informed and high quality service to customers.
- Managers provide an outstanding, timely and comprehensive programme of staff induction for direct delivery and subcontractor staff. Regular training and briefings on local intelligence take place, as well as sharing good practice and celebrating success. For example, recent training included the use of social media for networking and job search, development of motivational interview skills, exploring the work of the Prince's Trust and working with offenders.

- Leaders and managers have successfully identified a broad cross section of organisations with which to work to ensure the service is widely available across the region both in urban and rural areas. In particular, they ensure the service is readily accessible to harder-to-reach groups, through work with organisations such as local community centres, single parent clubs, the probation service and a spinal injuries unit.
- Most advisers actively encourage customers to develop their English, mathematics and employability skills. They also provide valuable assistance to customers in considering and tackling personal and social barriers to work. Subcontractors have close links with organisations such as local colleges, training providers and learndirect centres, which enable advisers to refer customers regularly to undertake suitable training and support in these areas.
- The safeguarding of customers and staff is a high priority. Advisers receive regular briefings and managers share examples of good practice at team meetings. The reporting of any incidents or concerns is prompt and responses are timely and appropriate. All subcontractors are required to report any issues related to safeguarding that they deal with under their own scheme and affect Tribal customers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Tribal

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	2	2

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 customers	19+
Approximate number of all customers over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 0
	Part-time: 29,199
Principal/CEO	Lindsey Burke
Date of previous inspection	November 2011
Website address	www.tribalgroup.com

Provider information at the time of the inspection	
Number of customers	30,312
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"> ■ Avon & Somerset Probation ■ City of Bath College ■ City of Bristol College ■ CMT ■ G First ■ Gloucester Probation Trust ■ HWV ■ JHP ■ Learning for Life ■ N-Gaged ■ North Wessex Training ■ Pinnacle People ■ Pitman Training ■ Prospect Services ■ Prospect Training Services ■ TABS Training ■ TCV ■ TOCCIC ■ Tomorrow's People ■ The Learning Curve ■ Weston College ■ Wiltshire College ■ Wiltshire Probation Trust.

Contextual information

Tribal holds the prime contract to deliver National Careers Service provision to the north of the South West region. The region has a working population of 1,260,225 and includes the city of Bristol and the urban conurbations of Swindon and Gloucester. In addition, there are significant areas of rural poverty. The region also covers two areas that are in the top 1% of the most deprived areas in the country, Bristol and Weston Super Mare. Around one in ten people living in these areas live in some of the 10% most deprived areas nationally.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Nigel Evans HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by the operations director, careers 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 into learning and employment 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 information, advice and guidance 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 Tribal 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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