

# NCT Ltd

## Independent learning provider

<b>Inspection dates</b>		8–11 October 2013
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Good-2</b>
	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 majority of learners complete their vocational, literacy and numeracy qualifications.
- Staff provide good support to ensure learners make significant progress in increasing their self-confidence and personal, social and independent thinking skills.
- The information, advice and guidance learners receive are very effective and ensure a high proportion of them progress into jobs, gain promotion and move on to higher courses.
- Training advisors develop strong partnerships with employers which ensure learners remain highly motivated as they develop and practise new skills in their workplaces.
- Strong and motivational leaders have a clear and effective strategy for business development and a firm focus on supporting local community initiatives and charities.
- Leaders and managers ensure staff are supported well and provide very effective continuous professional development.

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

- Too few intermediate health and social care apprentices complete their qualifications quickly enough.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are not yet outstanding. A few learners are not sufficiently challenged and individual learning targets do not always contain enough detail to ensure learners know what they have to do to improve.
- Written assessment feedback is not detailed enough and is not used effectively to improve learning.
- Data are not formally or fully analysed to inform managers about any differences in the performance of different groups of learners, and training advisors do not always promote equality and diversity well enough when they meet with learners.

## Full report

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

- Ensure teaching, learning and assessment become outstanding by making sure all learners are sufficiently challenged and have clear and detailed learning targets to help them improve their work. Ensure learners are encouraged to explore topics in greater depth and that written assessment feedback from standardisation meetings is more detailed and used more effectively.
- Monitor apprentices' progress more rigorously so that they remain on target to obtain their qualifications by their planned end dates. Where apprentices' progress slows ensure prompt action is taken to provide effective support and regain momentum.
- Ensure all learners receive the support they need to succeed through more thorough and systematic analysis of data about the performance of different groups. Improve the promotion of equality and diversity during training advisors' visits in order to increase learners' understanding.

### Inspection judgements

<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	Good
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- The large majority of learners make good progress and obtain their qualifications within the expected time. Success rates for learners are improving and are now higher than the national rate. Workplace learners and classroom-based learners achieve consistently well and higher than national rates. However, intermediate health and social care apprentices achieve at a slower pace.
- There is little difference in the achievement of learners from different backgrounds. Staff routinely collate data on the performance of all learners. However, they do not formally analyse data sufficiently, nor do they summarise findings or record actions where there are known differences in the achievement of different groups.
- Progression from intermediate to advanced-level programmes is good. A small minority of health and social care learners progress to higher education and generic management programmes. Many apprentices gain promotion at work and almost all are given additional responsibilities in their job roles as they acquire new skills and abilities.
- NCT gives good attention to ensure courses are linked to local jobs and are responsive to labour market requirements. Unemployed learners seeking jobs in the care sector make good progress developing their knowledge and readiness for work. These increased skills prepare them well for entry into a good range of roles within the care sector. A high proportion of these learners are successful in finding jobs with local employers.
- Learners' self-confidence increases significantly during their time in training. They demonstrate raised confidence levels through the good standard of work they produce and through their interaction with others as they carry out their work. NCT has recently implemented a very useful questionnaire for learners to measure the impact of learning on their social and personal lives. This has identified that a significant majority of learners have increased their social skills, self-esteem and employability skills.
- Learners develop good independent learning skills through the effective guidance of training advisors. Many learners are encouraged successfully to use research to extend their understanding of the care sector. They develop good awareness of the key principles of care and recognise the importance of promoting the independence of individuals receiving care services. Learners use their skills well to help employers increase standards of care in their workplaces. Learners develop good time-management skills and become more effective working in teams.

- All learners improve their use of English grammar, spelling and punctuation. They make good progress in their use of mathematics and many improve their information communication and technology skills. Functional-skills sessions ensure learners make good progress using their new abilities in the workplace. The standard of learners' written work is good.

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

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and contribute very effectively to the good outcomes for learners. Training advisors use their expertise very effectively to ensure learners enjoy learning and improve their skills and abilities. They understand learners' needs and interests well. Lessons are planned thoroughly and involve a good range of activities and resources which motivate learners.
- In the better sessions learners make good progress and receive effective support and encouragement to take increased responsibility for their own learning. Training advisors use a good variety of methods to engage and support learners, ensuring they understand how their new knowledge and understanding can be applied in the workplace. They provide learners with valuable encouragement to extend their interests through independent study and research. However, a small minority of sessions are not sufficiently challenging because training advisors fail to encourage learners to review some topics in sufficient depth.
- Training advisors develop effective partnerships with employers and have high expectations of learners. They make sure learners receive effective encouragement to aim high, aspire to improve their professional practice and explore career opportunities. Apprentices who are employed by home-care providers benefit from well-organised and very flexible drop-in workshops. This ensures they remain on target, are able to adjust the pace of learning and share ideas and interests with others.
- Learners receive a thorough induction to the organisation and all elements of the programme. All learners identify the best way for them to learn. Training advisors use this to agree ways of working during the programme, for example, the choice of electronic or paper-based portfolio with options to digitally record guided discussions. This helps to establish a strong supportive relationship which facilitates learning well.
- The vast majority of learning targets are fixed around the achievement of whole units rather than the specific learning needs or interests of individual learners. Creative technologies including tablets and smart phones are used imaginatively. This effectively encourages learners to use the internet to gain a broader understanding of current issues.
- Assessment is thorough and well planned. Verbal feedback is generally constructive and supportive but the quality of guidance for improvement is variable. Written feedback lacks sufficient detail to enable learners to reflect and improve. The recent introduction of a planned timeline for each aspect of the programme shows an early positive impact on current learners' progress and achievement.
- Functional skills are integrated well within programmes and this enables learners to make good progress in gaining confidence and skills. Learners and training advisors have access to a specialist advisor who ensures standards of teaching and learning remain high. All learners receive thorough initial assessment, the results of which are used to inform individual learning plans.
- Advice and guidance are highly effective and ensure that learners are well informed about options available to them at all stages in their learning. Learners appreciate the support of training advisors and employers enabling them to make good progress and plan for the future. NCT holds effective recruitment events at Jobcentre Plus locations in order to ensure learners are provided with detailed information about courses. Exit guidance is appropriately provided to learners and progression onto higher-level courses is good.
- Learners have a good understanding of key principles used in the care sector, such as valuing equality and diversity and ensuring vulnerable people are adequately safeguarded. For example,

learners recognise the importance of 'person-centred care', where individual needs and differences are identified and used to plan care services. However, training advisors do not always promote equality and diversity thoroughly enough when they meet with learners.

## The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Due to the enthusiasm and drive of the managing director, all involved with NCT are clear about the company's strategic vision. As a family orientated company, directors are passionate about providing high quality training and employment for local people. These core values permeate all activities run by NCT and those associated with the provider are very clear about its vision and priorities for the future.
- Managers work hard to monitor, improve and support teaching, learning and assessment. Performance management of staff and professional development are particularly effective. The introduction of functional skills has been managed well. The observation of teaching and learning has been effective in raising standards, although teaching, learning and assessment are not yet outstanding.
- Evaluation of activities is good and used well to inform the self-assessment process. Feedback from learners and employers is carefully reviewed and issues quickly addressed. For example, NCT carefully considers the location of venues used for training events in order to make it easier for learners to be able to use public transport to attend. Questionnaires are being used increasingly effectively with learners to identify the personal and social impact of learning. Arrangements for tracking the destination of learners are well established and used effectively.
- Robust quality assurance arrangements drive improvements and have effectively tackled underperformance in several areas. Self-assessment is rigorous; evaluations are appropriately detailed and generally accurate. The business action plan includes ambitious and realistic targets, which together with the good use of project management has been highly effective in addressing a number of areas for improvement. Current projects are correctly focused on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- The provider has strong partnerships with employers, local business networks and Jobcentre Plus. NCT is highly regarded by all stakeholders who speak openly of the positive attitude towards working relationships. The provider is highly supportive of local charities and heavily involved in community projects. Very good use is made of labour market information to inform accurate and effective business planning.
- NCT has an appropriately detailed equality and diversity policy and action plan containing objectives and monitoring measures for the continuous promotion of equality, particularly through teaching and learning. However, actions to increase the participation of under-represented groups, for example males on care-related courses have not yet been successful. The use of data to identify gaps in achievement of different groups of learners has so far had limited impact. NCT has a very good understanding of the barriers and challenges faced by many local people and is committed to improving the economic well-being of local communities.
- The provider meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. The safeguarding policy is appropriate and it is updated regularly in order to reflect any changes in legislation. Staff receive comprehensive annual training on safeguarding matters and are confident when dealing with safeguarding related issues. All training advisors have accreditation in health and safety risk assessment. Learners report feeling safe; employers have appropriate arrangements in place to ensure the health and safety of apprentices.
- Legislative aspects linked to health and safety, safeguarding and equality and diversity are promoted adequately through a range of processes and resources including the discussion of 'hot topics' each month. However, these are not used consistently and a minority of training advisors miss opportunities to develop learners' knowledge sufficiently. On other occasions the content of discussions is not sufficiently recorded on learners' files.

**Record of Main Findings (RMF)****Northern Care Training Limited**

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance:  1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	Apprenticeships
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
Health and social care	2

Type of provider	Independent learning provider								
Age range of learners	16+								
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 206								
	Part-time: 529								
Principal/CEO	Mr Steven Ward								
Date of previous inspection	January 2009								
Website address	www.nct-ltd.co.uk.								
<b>Provider information at the time of the inspection</b>									
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	16	N/A	2	N/A	N/A	
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total				
	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+			
	1	43	1	62	N/A	N/A			
Number of learners aged 14-16									
	N/A								
	N/A								
Number of community learners	N/A								
Number of employability learners	N/A								
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)								
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	N/A								

## Contextual information

The provider is situated in Peterlee near Sunderland in the north east of England and provides training for learners primarily within this region. The population of the region is around 1.4 million. Around 31% of the adult working population are not qualified to intermediate level, a further 23% of adults in the region are qualified to intermediate but not advanced level. The region's population has around 4% of people from a minority ethnic background, compared to 19% nationally. The region has lower levels of economic activity than the national average and the highest level of unemployment in the UK.

## Information about this inspection

<b>Lead inspector</b>	Dr Daniel Grant
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Five additional inspectors, assisted by the director of support services 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 area 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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