

# Nottinghamshire Training Network

## Independent Learning Provider

Inspection dates		28 April–02 May 2014
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement-3</b>
	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:

- Success rates in workplace and classroom-based provision declined in 2012/13 and the percentage of apprentices completing their framework within planned timescales is too low.
- Data to identify learners who are progressing to further learning and/or employment are not being collected sufficiently well enough across the subcontractor network.
- The teaching of functional skills is underdeveloped.
- Too much teaching, learning and assessment is not yet good across the subcontractor network.
- The actions of management and the board in 2012/13 were insufficient to raise standards. New governors and managers are now in place but their actions have not had sufficient time to secure enough improvement to the quality of provision and outcomes for learners.
- Learner understanding and application of equality and diversity matters are underdeveloped.
- The action planning within the observation of teaching and learning and contract management processes are not specific or measurable enough to secure rapid improvement.

#### This provider has the following strengths:

- Learners acquire good work-related skills in most subject areas through well qualified and experienced subject area subcontractor staff.
- The new management team has quickly identified and actioned improvements which are currently securing modest improvement with the potential to improve significantly the work of the subcontractor network.
- The provider has removed poorer performing subcontractors and replaced them with higher quality providers in order to provide stronger provision.
- The new board has devised a clear strategy to focus on the regional priorities of the network.

## Full report

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

- Improve the success and achievement of learners within the planned duration of their programmes by:
  - Placing greater emphasis on the progression of learners to further learning and/or employment
  - Eradicating the slow progress experienced by too many learners
  - Ensuring the recent gains in improved outcomes for learners are maintained and further improved.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
  - Developing functional skills delivery across the subcontractor network ensuring that delivery relates to the learners' job roles
  - Conducting progress reviews which include employers and ensure learners progress well
  - Improving the target setting for learners to improve their progress, broaden their skill base and raise aspirations
  - Deepening learner understanding of equality and diversity issues as they apply to their industry sector
  - Ensuring learners take full ownership of their learning through improved induction procedures.
- Improve the quality of assessment by:
  - Ensuring all staff are well trained in making good use of initial assessment to plan learning and provide sufficient challenge to learners of all abilities
  - Provide sufficient assessment opportunities to ensure that learners make good progress
  - Ensuring written feedback to learners helps them improve their work.
- Improve the quality and performance of the subcontracting network by:
  - Ensuring that performance/contract management action planning is specific enough and that identified actions are followed through in order to secure rapid improvement
  - Further developing the observation of teaching and learning process in order that it rapidly secures raised standards
  - Developing the capacity of each member of the subcontractor network to deliver good quality functional skills programmes
  - Ensuring the board monitors the impact of management actions in securing improvement in learner outcomes and overall quality of provision
  - Require the subcontractor network to share examples of good practice.

### Inspection judgements

<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	Requires improvement
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- Since the last inspection overall success rates in apprenticeship programmes have improved to around national rates. However, the rates of success within planned timescales, while improving, are still too low. In-year retention of apprentices is high. Success and achievement in workplace and classroom-based learning programmes declined in 2012/13 from previous good levels to around the national rates. However, Nottinghamshire Training Network's (NTN) own data indicate that this decline has been reversed and modest improvement has been achieved in this current year.
- Learners' acquisition of improved English, mathematics and functional skills is variable across the subcontractor network. In the better subcontractors achievement and success are quickly

acquired and support the development of the main qualification aim. However, a few subcontractors have been too slow in developing their own capacity to deliver these skills. NTN has recently introduced actions to develop these subcontractors.

- While NTN has informal information about a few learners who progress to further learning or gain enhancements to their employment it has not established formal arrangements to ensure all subcontractors collect and analyse sufficiently well the progression and destinations data when learners have completed their programmes. This means that NTN does not have an accurate picture of learners' progression to courses at higher levels or into work that meets local and national needs.
- Currently, not all groups of learners achieve as well as each other due to the variance in performance across the subcontractor network. Through improved contracting procedures performance is being improved in the poorer performing subcontractors and this is narrowing the achievement gap by ensuring more learners achieve their programme aims within planned timescales.
- Overall the quality of learners' work is of an appropriate standard for the qualification being undertaken. The rate of progress that learners are making is improving. Stronger management information processes are enabling NTN to more closely monitor learner progress and identify and rectify any slow progress. NTN is closely monitoring and challenging its subcontractors to improve the percentage of learners achieving past their planned end date and this percentage is reducing.
- Personal, social and employability skills are developed well in most programmes. Employers provide additional training as required and learners are acquiring good gains in taking extra responsibility, independent thinking and confidence. However, in business programmes there is an overemphasis on the gathering of evidence for assessment purposes rather than on skill development.

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

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment are not yet good and result in outcomes for learners that are not yet good enough. Staff in newly -introduced subcontractors plan their group sessions well to help learners to understand the concepts and theory of various aspects of their learning. However, many staff in longer-established subcontractors do not have sufficiently well-developed teaching and training skills.
- The quality of on-the-job training is good, particularly in business studies, employability, care, HGV drivers and engineering programmes. This helps learners acquire and, in many cases, develop good vocational skills. A strong focus on acquiring valued workplace skills in teaching and learning courses on employability programmes has enabled a majority of learners to gain employment or progress to further learning.
- Assessors provide good oral feedback during assessment visits and discussions. This helps learners improve their confidence, confirms their skills development and their progress towards the completion of their qualifications. However, learners receive too little written feedback. Much feedback is overly positive and too general to add any real value to the learners' personal and skills development.
- Engineering and employability tutors are well-accomplished at linking the relevance of English, mathematics and functional skills to vocational programmes. They make the learning of these skills fun, highly relevant and interactive. However, most staff delivering other programmes are either not sufficiently skilled or fully confident in delivering these skills. This means opportunities to relate English and mathematics to the learners' workplaces or daily lives are missed and learners do not become more effective in the use of these skills.

- Subcontractor staff conduct a satisfactory assessment with learners at the start of their programme and place most of them on appropriate courses. Occasionally staff have inappropriately recruited learners to programmes that are not fully meeting their needs. For example, a subcontractor enrolled learners to a delivery vehicle apprenticeship programme who had little desire, aptitude or commitment to complete their functional skills in English and mathematics.
- The majority of subcontractor staff do not use the detailed findings of the initial assessment of learners well enough. This leads to insufficient challenge for more able learners as they focus on achieving their qualifications rather than developing high level skills. Staff do not always promote ways in which learners can reinforce and consolidate their learning through the numerous opportunities that exist at work and in their daily lives.
- Much induction is useful in introducing learners to the programmes and requirements of the qualifications. Learners receive a very broad range of information but frequently this is delivered in an unimaginative way and the contents of induction are not often memorable.
- Information, advice and guidance are appropriate for the majority of learners. Learners with the new subcontractors such as canal engineering receive invaluable sector-specific guidance for the programmes, careers, wages and working conditions in the sector as well as progression opportunities. This is not the case with all the subcontractors where too many learners do not receive sufficient information to make informed choices about their careers and raise their aspirations.
- Subcontractor staff review learners' progress at regular intervals to ensure that learners remain on track to complete their qualifications in the planned period. However, many learners historically did not receive timely support and assessment and target setting within reviews was not specific enough or challenging. Although improving, with over half of the total learners with the new subcontractors making expected or better progress, several subcontractors have had high staff turnover affecting access to assessment.
- Subcontractor staff do not encourage learners sufficiently well to relate theory to their practical work including the true value their skills add to their employers' businesses through improved customer experience, better staff retention and higher vocational standards. Not enough employers take an active part in identifying opportunities to challenge learners to produce high quality work-related assignments and projects.
- Learners develop good knowledge and awareness of equality and diversity in society including various faiths. They have a sound understanding of how to recognise discrimination and bullying and what to do when faced with such matters. A large majority of subcontractor staff do not extend and deepen learners' understanding to apply this knowledge in their job role and work context to provide better quality and customer-focussed services to their clients.

## Health and social care

### Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment are not good enough and neither, although improving, are outcomes for learners. Tutors have good vocational knowledge and commitment, which they effectively use to support learners' understanding of the theory and practice of caring for vulnerable adults.
- The development of learners' English and mathematics skills requires improvement. While tutors are keen to support learners to improve these skills, they are not all yet sufficiently trained or experienced to do this effectively.
- Learners are self-motivated, regularly reflect on their job role and develop a greater understanding of the needs of service users. For example one learner explained that, after

learning about different types of communication, she is now able to understand and respond better to the needs of individual residents in a care home. Another learner effectively identifies and makes decisions about dealing with information disclosed by service users.

- Learners work in a variety of settings and many benefit from supportive employers who are keen for their learners to succeed. In these cases, learners make good progress as workplace managers are routinely involved in planning learning and employer-led training is well linked to the learning programme. However, in a few settings this is not the case, as managers are not sufficiently involved in the learning process.
- Tutors skilfully coach learners and engage them in lively professional discussions. Learners benefit from tutors' extensive sector knowledge which they use to provide realistic examples to expand and broaden their understanding of topics.
- Tutors carry out frequent and thorough assessment of learners' vocational practice. However, most tutors lack confidence and experience to teach the broader aspects of the apprenticeship framework. Many sessions lack variety in teaching and learning activities to enthuse and interest learners and there is an over-reliance on hand-outs and worksheets.
- Tutors provide learners with prompt feedback on work completed and verbal feedback is usually detailed and helpful. This encourages learners to understand how to improve their practice. However written feedback in most cases is limited to identifying whether or not the assessment criteria has been met, with insufficient guidance on how the quality of their work can be improved. Target setting is satisfactory, although targets are not routinely set to improve learners' English and mathematics skills.
- Initial assessment is accurate in identifying learners' literacy and numeracy needs. However, the results are not used effectively to personalise learning sufficiently and as a result, not all learners are adequately challenged and stretched to achieve their potential. For example learners with prior experience in the sector, have the ability to make quicker progress, or study in more depth, yet fail to do so.
- Learners receive satisfactory initial advice and guidance providing an informed start to their programmes. Learners receive a wide range of information about additional support available for those learners that require it. For example, learners with dyslexia and dyspraxia receive particularly detailed guidance about how to access support. Learners receive good advice about how to progress in their careers and next steps in education and training.
- Learners develop a broad awareness of equality and diversity in their workplaces, however, opportunities to develop a deeper understanding within the wider care sector are not routinely planned by their tutors. Resources used by a few tutors, are limited in content and do not allow learners to consider the wider issues of topics. For example in hand-outs to support learners' understanding of Christianity, there are insufficient references to the different branches within this religion.

## Administration and business management

### Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment are not good enough, neither are outcomes for learners. Though improving too many learners make slow progress. The arrangements to provide additional on-the-job training are not routinely applied when sessions have been missed through, for example, work constraints, illness or assessor availability.
- Tutors provide good motivation and support for learning. Learners benefit from sound working relationships with assessors who provide high levels of encouragement for a wide variety of learners including those whose first language is not English.

- The development of learners' English and mathematics skills requires improvement. While tutors are keen to support learners to improve these skills, they are not all yet sufficiently trained or experienced to do this effectively.
- Assessment is good and vocational staff are well qualified and experienced. Sessions are well planned to meet the needs of learners and maximise opportunities for assessment. Learners benefit from full involvement in planning their assessments. Tutors respond well to the needs of learners and provide flexible assessment arrangements. For example they negotiate with learners who work night shifts or who have work commitments to provide opportunities for assessment.
- Learners are not sufficiently challenged to work at a faster pace and to extend their learning. In the better sessions tutors make good use of coaching skills with good use of open questions to involve the learner and extend their thinking. For example, a worker in a hospital was encouraged to think about the challenges of working in that environment. However, in a few sessions there is insufficient promotion of learning to extend and develop research skills.
- Learners English, mathematics and functional skill development is skills are insufficiently linked to learners' job roles or life experiences. In a minority of cases learners do not receive clear explanations of some aspects of their study; particularly learners do not benefit from clear explanation of key literacy concepts. For example, the difference between the use of language features and purpose of text.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Equality and diversity are introduced in induction sessions and learners work in diverse groups. They respect and value differences but generally equality and diversity questions in reviews are not adequately set in context so that, learners understand the relevance of these questions and the same questions are often asked at each review. Equality and diversity topics are insufficiently related to learners' job roles or experience.
- Verbal feedback on learners' work is good and shows them where they need to improve, however written feedback on work does not routinely identify spelling or grammatical errors or adequately identify where learners can develop their literacy skills.
- The use of information learning technologies to promote learning is good. Learners are given access to an appropriate virtual learning environment and encouraged to use this. Tutors provide learners with clear and useful hand-outs and learning materials are generally clear and easy to use.
- Initial assessment effectively identifies learners' prior achievements and development needs and ensures learners are enrolled on appropriate programmes. The results of initial assessment are not always used effectively to plan programmes. Individual learning plans are satisfactory. The better plans identify targets and show good monitoring however many targets are insufficiently specific or measureable, for example, to improve current skills.
- Information advice and guidance are appropriate to the needs of learners. Policies are given to learners and clearly explained. During induction learners are given appropriate information, however, induction is not memorable and does not sufficiently inspire learners.

### The effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Senior managers and board members were slow to take effective improvement actions after the Ofsted report of 2012 which identified that the provider's programmes required improvement and overall performance dipped in the 2012/13 contract year. However, a new management team, chair and board of governors have been appointed; they have collectively established a stronger strategic direction for the organisation.



- Expectations for raising quality and performance have much improved since the appointment of the new managers and board. However, while the provider has secured modest improvements and managers have taken strong actions it is too early to judge the impact of improvements in key aspects of the provision and if they have been sustained.
- Governance arrangements have much improved since the last inspection and early indicators are that these are now good. Information provided to the board has a suitable emphasis on the quality of teaching, learning, and assessment. Plans are at an advanced stage for the performance of the board to be externally evaluated along with the performance of the chief executive officer appropriately managed by the chair of governors.
- Performance management is improving. New staff have been appointed to manage the performance of the subcontractors. Performance management suitably focuses on ensuring that the quality of the provision improves; although formal action planning from monitoring visits is not detailed or specific enough to measure and ensure rapid improvement in the underperforming subcontractors.
- The observation processes used to raise standards in teaching, learning and assessment of the subcontractor network have been recently revised and the frequency of observations much increased. However, subsequent action planning arising from these visits is not specific enough in order to gain speedy improvement and ensure that planned actions have been completed. For instance, when tutor development needs are identified NTN management is not ensuring that the subcontractor has provided appropriate training.
- The provider is improving the development and capacity of its' subcontractor supply chain through a range of initiatives, for instance training sessions and network meetings. However, network meetings are not always attended well enough and the sharing of good practice is not sufficient to help network members raise standards.
- NTN has revised the processes for self-assessment but recognises that it requires further improvement and plans are at an advanced stage to implement these changes for the next report. Development planning accurately identifies the challenges facing NTN. The plan is in a suitable format and identifies appropriate success measures. However, too few necessary actions have been carried out within their planned timescales.
- The provider is successfully ensuring that changes to the curriculum more closely meet national and local priorities. The contract letting process has been re-defined for the 2014 procurement process. The proportion of apprenticeship provision is increasing and the short course provision is more closely aligned to the needs of local employers and regional skills needs. However, the provision to develop English and mathematics is not fully developed across the subcontractor network and this requires further improvement.
- The arrangements to promote equality and diversity by the subcontractors are improving through NTN training and development for subcontractor staff in how to promote this effectively in their teaching, learning and assessment. NTN ensures that its subcontractors have suitable policies and procedures in-place in order to tackle bullying and discrimination. However, equality and diversity matters are not routinely monitored at board level.
- The provider is meeting its statutory requirements for the safeguarding of all learners. All learners are either employed or over 19 years of age. NTN requires each sub-contractor to appoint a suitably trained designated safeguarding officer to ensure that learners are kept safe

## Record of Main Findings (RMF)

### Nottinghamshire Training Network

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

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
<b>Health and Social Care</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Administration</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Business Management</b>	<b>3</b>



<b>Type of provider</b>	Not for profit organisation								
<b>Age range of learners</b>	16+								
<b>Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year</b>	1,141								
<b>CEO</b>	Mrs K Hodgson								
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	09 November 2012								
<b>Website address</b>	www.ntn-wbl.org.uk								
<b>Provider information at the time of the inspection</b>									
<b>Main course or learning programme level</b>	<b>Level 1 or below</b>		<b>Level 2</b>		<b>Level 3</b>		<b>Level 4 and above</b>		
<b>Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)</b>	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	
	N/A	50	N/A	68	N/A	24	N/A	N/A	
<b>Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>		<b>Advanced</b>		<b>Higher</b>				
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+			
	5	433	N/A	242	N/A	14			
<b>Number of traineeships</b>	16-19		19+		Total				
	N/A		N/A		N/A				
<b>Number of learners aged 14-16</b>	N/A								
<b>Full-time</b>	N/A								
<b>Part-time</b>	N/A								
<b>Number of community learners</b>	N/A								
<b>Number of employability learners</b>	52								
<b>Funding received from</b>	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)								
<b>At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Astral Training Limited</li> <li>■ Babington Business College</li> <li>■ CQ3</li> <li>■ Centre for Business Development</li> <li>■ EMD</li> <li>■ JB Management Limited</li> <li>■ North Nottinghamshire College of Further Education</li> <li>■ Safety Problem Solutions</li> <li>■ Canal Engineering</li> <li>■ STS.</li> </ul>								

## Contextual information

Nottinghamshire Training Network (NTN) is based in Mansfield and is a not for profit, membership-based organisation which delivers its government funded contract through a range of providers. Since the last inspection NTN has recently appointed a new chair to the governors and a newly established management team. NTN currently has thirteen subcontractors appointed through a competitive tendering process but five of these have only residual contracts from the 2012/13 contracting year and two are very new to the network. The majority of learners are employed and are based throughout England. The impact of socio-economic factors varies according to the region in which the learners are based. At the time of inspection the vast majority of learners were on apprenticeship programmes.

## Information about this inspection

<b>Lead inspector</b>	Maxine Mayer HMI
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Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by the supply chain 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 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 relevant 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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Piccadilly Gate  
Store St  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

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