

# Nottinghamshire Training Network

Independent learning provider

## Inspection dates

6–9 October 2015

## Overall effectiveness

## Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
Apprenticeships	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings

### This is a provider that requires improvement

- Not enough apprentices complete their apprenticeship frameworks within planned timescales.
- Not enough assessment practice is good and assessment sometimes starts too late in apprentices' programmes.
- Teaching and learning are not consistently effective.
- Individual learning plans are not used effectively enough to monitor and drive apprentices' progress; targets in them are not sufficiently specific to apprentices' individual needs.
- Assessors and trainers do not provide enough help to apprentices for them to improve their English and mathematics skills beyond the minimum requirements of their apprenticeship framework.
- The actions of leaders and managers have led to improvement in much of the provider's work, but have not yet ensured that all aspects are of the high quality needed to secure good provision.

### The provider has the following strengths

- Most apprentices receive good training while at work and make at least the progress expected of them.
- Apprentices develop good occupational and employability skills; the vast majority successfully retain their jobs after completing their apprenticeships.
- Nottinghamshire Training Network provides good support to help subcontractors improve provision and takes rigorous and effective action if they do not perform well enough.

## Full report

### Information about the provider

- Nottinghamshire Training Network (NTN) provides apprenticeships to over 600 apprentices across 14 vocational areas. The largest of these are in driving goods vehicles, business administration, customer service and highways maintenance. Together they account for more than half of the provision. Adult health and social care apprentices make up a further tenth, although NTN no longer recruits to these programmes. Classroom and workplace learning made up around half of its learners in 2014/15, but there are very few in the current year.
- Apprentices are employed in workplaces in most English regions, with the largest numbers in the East Midlands and Yorkshire and Humberside. Subcontractors carry out most of the training.

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

- Ensure assessors monitor, assess and record apprentices' progress rigorously and accurately, and take action quickly if they fall behind so that the proportion who achieve their frameworks in planned timescales increases.
- Use results from assessments at the start of programmes to set precise short- and long-term targets for apprentices that meet their individual needs.
- Integrate the teaching of English and mathematics into all vocational programmes so that apprentices improve their skills in these subjects. Provide trainers and assessors with the training, skills and resources they need to accomplish this.
- Provide training for assessors and trainers in planning effective assessments and making classroom learning relevant.
- Ensure subcontractors play a full and active role in supporting assessors and trainers to improve their practice in teaching, learning and assessment.
- Help apprentices to understand fundamental British values and how they can keep themselves safe from radicalisation by carefully integrating consideration of these matters into their training.
- Make governors more accountable for improving achievement and standards through identifying a suitable member of the board to lead on this area and by increasing their focus on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

# Inspection judgements

## Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management have improved since the previous inspection but are not yet good. Leaders and managers have introduced appropriately robust and detailed arrangements for managing and monitoring the performance of subcontractors. While these arrangements have not yet brought about consistently good provision, they benefit current apprentices.
- Support for new subcontractors is good. They receive a comprehensive induction into the requirements of apprenticeships and good, practical help. Much more stringent monitoring arrangements have resulted in NTN ending other contracts where the quality of training failed to improve.
- Following the unexpected and sudden closure of two subcontractors and serious legal problems concerning another in mid 2014, managers and the board of governors took prompt and effective action to protect apprentices who were at risk of losing their training.
- Leaders and managers work productively with the local enterprise partnership (LEP). They have aligned their provision very closely with local priorities such as the growth in the logistics sector in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. They check carefully that subcontractors' provision meets priorities in the other regions where they work.
- Observers of training, learning and assessment accurately identify key strengths and provide trainers with detailed help for improving weaknesses. This results in improved learning and training.
- Managers provide plentiful, good-quality professional development to their subcontractors on how to improve teaching, learning and assessment. However, leaders and managers do not ensure that subcontractors rigorously monitor how well all their assessors apply these improved strategies and as a result not all apprentices benefit.
- The process of self-assessment has improved. Managers have used it well to reflect on variability in the quality of training and identify remedies but it is too early to judge whether this will bring about greater consistency of good practice.
- NTN has prioritised implementing actions to tackle recommendations from the previous inspection. Close monitoring of subcontractors has contributed to increases in the pace at which apprentices make progress. Other actions, such as developing the capacity of subcontractors to teach functional skills, have begun but require further work to be fully effective.
- Action to promote equality and appreciation of diversity is appropriate. Managers closely monitor the achievement of different groups of learners and have identified that none are currently underperforming.
- **The governance of the provider**
  - Governors are now better informed about the provision since the previous inspection. This includes receiving helpful regular reports showing clearly how well subcontractors are performing and highlighting areas of concern. They now provide better oversight and challenge to managers, but do not focus closely enough on driving improvement in teaching, learning and assessment.
  - Governors have a wide range of appropriate skills and experience. They use them well to provide managers with good strategic and commercial advice.
- **The arrangements for safeguarding are effective**
  - All staff have received appropriate training in safeguarding. NTN and all its subcontractors have designated officers for safeguarding. Managers closely follow safe recruitment guidelines and are careful to risk assess new subcontractors. All subcontractors have attended suitable meetings to help them to identify and take appropriate action if learners show signs of being drawn into radicalisation or extremist behaviour.
  - Arrangements to protect vulnerable younger learners are appropriate. For example an apprentice aged 16 to 18 was carefully supervised during residential training with older apprentices.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement. This is reflected in the achievement of apprentices, which is improving, but not yet good. Most apprentices make at least the progress expected of them, and often make good progress in learning in the workplace.
- The training that apprentices receive in their workplaces is good. Most employers ensure that apprentices' job roles provide them with good scope to develop the skills they need for their apprenticeships.

- A high proportion of apprentices receive good coaching and support from more experienced colleagues who act as mentors. The close supervision a mentor provides to apprentice goods vehicle drivers ensures they recognise the significant hazards that different types of road conditions present and the importance of following delivery instructions precisely.
- The majority of apprentices benefit from a well-balanced programme of practical and classroom-based training. As a result, the training closely meets the needs of both the apprentices and the employer and most make at least expected progress.
- In a minority of NTN's apprenticeships, training and assessment do not focus closely enough on linking theory to vocational practice or with the training employers provide. This slows the apprentices' progress.
- The majority of apprentices receive effective teaching in classrooms and training workshops. Trainers use their extensive occupational expertise well to provide good demonstrations of practical skills in areas such as security systems installation. Trainers coach apprentices effectively, leading to worthwhile gains in their abilities to reflect, solve problems and think independently.
- For a small minority of apprentices, teaching is not sufficiently effective. Classroom activities are not well-enough prepared and trainers do not relate content closely enough to what apprentices are learning and need at work. As a result, the sessions fail to maintain the interest of apprentices and they do not make enough progress.
- Arrangements to develop apprentices' functional skills in English and mathematics have improved since the previous inspection, but are not yet good enough. Assessors generally provide good support for those who need to achieve qualifications in these subjects, particularly at level 2. However, for a small minority, support to help them improve starts too late in their programmes, impeding their progress.
- Apprentices who are exempt from the requirement to study functional skills receive too little support within their training programmes to improve their English and mathematics further. The scope rarely extends beyond a focus on the correct use of job-related vocabulary or help with basic mathematical calculations. A minority of assessors and trainers do not routinely correct spelling and mathematical errors in apprentices' work.
- Not enough assessment practice is good. For a small minority of apprentices, such as those following fabrication and welding programmes, assessments are poorly planned and start too late in their programmes.
- Across the programmes, assessors provide apprentices with good oral feedback that effectively motivates them to do better. However, not enough apprentices receive written feedback that identifies clearly what they need to do to improve their skills or standards of work.
- Targets on apprentices' individual learning plans are not always closely enough matched to apprentices' individual needs. This is because assessors do not use the results of assessment at the start of apprentices' programmes well enough to identify precisely enough gaps in apprentices' knowledge.
- Practice in reviewing and tracking apprentices' progress against their targets is too variable. It is thorough and regular for apprentices in areas such as business administration and call centre operations, but not effective enough in some others such as fabrication and welding. Where apprentices are identified as falling behind, not all receive sufficiently prompt support to catch up.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare** require improvement

- Apprentices develop the good skills they need to sustain employment successfully. Customer service apprentices, for example, point to how their increasing confidence in dealing with challenging clients has made them more effective employees.
- Most apprentices are enthusiastic and committed to their work. Employers and supervisors praise their apprentices' good attendance and timekeeping, and point to their responsible, mature attitudes and their reliability.
- Apprentices develop a good understanding of how to stay safe at work. Those in areas such as fabrication and welding and security system installation are highly aware of essential elements of health and safety, such as wearing suitable protective equipment.
- Apprentices generally have an appropriate understanding of how to respond to any incidents of bullying and harassment in the workplace. However, too few apprentices have received training on keeping themselves safe when using social media.
- Most apprentices benefit from clear and impartial advice when they are recruited to apprenticeships. As a result, apprentices make suitable decisions about training options and understand well how these relate to their career ambitions.
- A small minority of apprentices gain useful and highly relevant additional qualifications. These include

licences to drive heavy goods vehicles and certificates that confirm their competency to weld to particular industrial standards. Some others receive training on using specialised computer systems or software.

- Too few apprentices take responsibility for identifying opportunities at work and elsewhere to help maintain good progress in their apprenticeship. Not enough routinely study outside the time set aside for their training.
- Most apprentices understand clearly their responsibilities towards equality legislation and how it applies to their workplace, but do not sufficiently appreciate how work colleagues or customers from diverse backgrounds might have different cultural norms, values and beliefs. Their ability to articulate fundamental British values is not well developed.
- Apprentices following goods vehicles drivers' programmes receive training to appreciate the importance of fitness and the negative impact that poor dietary choices can have on their driving skills and well-being. However, not enough other apprentices receive such helpful guidance.

## **Outcomes for learners**

## **require improvement**

- Most apprentices make at least the progress expected of them. This includes those following apprenticeships with significant numbers. For a small minority of apprentices, progress is slow.
- Progress is particularly good for a small number of learners following workplace-learning programmes.
- Many apprentices demonstrate good skills in the areas which are at the core of their apprenticeship. Call centre apprentices become adept at managing relationships with customers when providing contact centre services for large national organisations. Business administration apprentices routinely demonstrate high levels of efficiency and skill when dealing with documents and using computers in the workplace.
- The standard of apprentices' work in their portfolios of evidence across NTN is generally appropriate and sometimes high.
- Not enough apprentices complete their apprenticeship frameworks. The proportion is approaching those of providers nationally but requires improvement. The proportion who complete within planned timescales has risen since the last inspection but remains too low.
- The achievement of qualifications by classroom-based learners is good. Achievement has risen consistently over the past three years and for the most recent cohort was very high. However, achievement by the small number of workplace learners was too low.
- Most apprentices achieve a functional skills qualification in English and/or mathematics when they need it to fulfil the requirements of their apprenticeship framework. However, too few intermediate apprentices achieve a qualification at a higher level than the minimum required.
- Few gaps exist in achievement by different groups of apprentices. A higher proportion aged 16 to 18 complete apprenticeships successfully than those over 19, but the number of younger apprentices is very small.
- The majority of adult learners on programmes for those seeking work successfully complete their programme. The proportion that subsequently progress on to sustained employment with further training is high.

## Provider details

<b>Type of provider</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Age range of learners</b>	16+
<b>Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year</b>	1,073
<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Karen Hodgson
<b>Website address</b>	<a href="http://www.ntn-wbl.org.uk">www.ntn-wbl.org.uk</a>

## Provider information at the time of the inspection

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+
	0	1	0	24	0	7	0	0
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	39	451	2	124	0	4		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	0		0		0			
Number of learners aged 14–16	0							
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<div><div></div><div>Astral Training Limited</div><div></div><div>Canal Engineering Limited</div><div></div><div>Ensis Solutions</div><div></div><div>N-Gaged Training and Recruitment Limited</div><div></div><div>Qualitrain</div><div></div><div>Shaping Skills</div><div></div><div>Ultimate Performance Training Centre Limited</div><div></div><div>Winning Pitch</div></div>							

## Information about this inspection

### Inspection team

Alastair Pearson, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Victor Reid	Her Majesty's Inspector
Christine Blowman	Ofsted Inspector
Maureen Deary	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Gay	Ofsted Inspector
Pauline Hawkesford	Ofsted Inspector

The above team was assisted by the Chief Executive Officer as nominee, and carried out the inspection at short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of students and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

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