

Education Development Trust NE

National Careers Service

Inspection dates

7–10 February 2017

Overall effectiveness		Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding	
Quality of information, advice and guidance	Good	
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding	
Outcomes for customers	Outstanding	

Summary of key findings

This is an outstanding provider

- Customers make excellent progress relative to their starting points in developing their skills, knowledge and understanding of what they need to do next to gain employment or progress in their current or chosen career.
- Managers place a very strong emphasis on targeting identified priority groups by engaging with specialist subcontractors who work closely with specific communities in the region.
- Very experienced and very well-qualified advisers use their interpersonal skills and expertise to create a good rapport with customers. They provide very effective personal support to help them deal with a range of barriers to employment.
- Advisers encourage customers to improve their English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) skills very successfully where required.
- Customers acquire an excellent range of appropriate employability skills and greatly improved confidence and self-esteem that enable them to present themselves to employers in a positive manner and re-enter the job market or progress into new career routes successfully.
- Managers have taken decisive action to restructure the provision and have given advisers the independence to be creative and responsive to meeting the needs of individual customers extremely well.
- Customers benefit greatly from the comprehensive labour market information provided to managers and advisers by a highly competent and enthusiastic data team.
- Advisers occasionally do too much for customers and fail to develop their independent job search skills fully.
- In a minority of group and one-to-one sessions, advisers do not recap or check learning sufficiently.

Full report

Information about the provider

- CfBT Advice & Guidance, established in 1997, is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Education Development Trust (EDT), a leading UK and international charity established in 1968. The company delivers National Careers Service contracts in the north east and south central regions of England, as well as careers guidance in over 60 schools in London.
- EDT delivers nearly all of the advice and guidance sessions directly and subcontracts a small proportion of its activity to seven local providers.
- The north east region has a population of around 2.6 million and has the highest rate of unemployment in the UK at 7.8%. Fewer people in the north east have a qualification at level 4 or above than nationally. The proportion of the population who are claiming Jobseeker's Allowance or Universal Credit is higher than the UK as a whole at 3.9%. The north east also includes areas that rank highly in the national indices of deprivation.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and managers should ensure that:
 - advisers make sure that customers take a greater responsibility for completing their own actions and career plans to develop their independence and individual skills further
 - advisers in group sessions and one-to-one meetings recap and check learning and/or understanding
 - skills action plans are of a consistently high quality and are always specific and challenging
 - advisers clearly explain to customers their rationale for prioritising some actions and not others and why they include them in their action plan.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leaders and managers are highly ambitious for their customers. Through their diligent and relentless focus on the values and moral purpose set by the trustees, leaders ensure that all advisers and support staff recognise and celebrate the difference that high-quality advice and guidance make to their customers' lives.
- Leaders and managers exemplify their high expectations of advisers and support staff by measuring and evaluating performance against the service's rigorous standards for achievement.
- Demanding targets, supported by highly effective and strategic changes that give advisers more individual control over their work with customers, have led to sustained improvement in outcomes, improved financial stability and contractual growth.
- Managers give clear direction to help develop and maintain high-quality provision. They allow local area managers and advisers the independence they need to tailor advice and guidance to the needs and aspirations of customers in distinct rural, urban and coastal communities. By enabling a flexible and rapid response, managers and advisers ensure that customers affected by large-scale redundancies get the specialist support, advice and guidance they need to change careers, start their own businesses or participate in learning or further training.
- Regional managers are proactive and influential advocates for the north east through their effective partnership working with local enterprise partnerships and with local, regional and national government agencies. This had led in Newcastle, for example, to the setting up of a one-stop shop in the central library that enables customers to benefit from immediate and helpful referrals to other agencies. The EDT leadership team works extremely well with a small number of subcontractors to meet the specialist needs of groups such young people who have complex social and behavioural issues.
- A highly competent data team ensures that managers and advisers use data well to identify strengths and rectify areas for development. Through frequent updates on labour market information, managers and advisers ensure that customers know about relevant career, education and employment opportunities. Managers have committed high levels of investment and time to develop innovative and effective digital and social media routes to advice and guidance. For example, very well-structured support for schools through an interactive and informative web-based portal gives teachers, young people and employers access to independent advice and guidance and to relevant and useful resources to encourage work-related learning and activities.
- Self-assessment is rigorous and comprehensive at all levels. Managers and trustees know the provision's strengths and areas for development and articulate very well the actions taken to improve and sustain its high quality.
- Performance management is highly effective, with managers and all staff working cooperatively to achieve the high expectations. Managers also support staff to access and achieve relevant ongoing professional development. Rigorous management of subcontractors leads to support and challenge to share good practice and improve performance. Where performance fails to meet their exacting standards and does not

improve, managers close contracts down.

- EDT managers promote equality and diversity very well. The values they demonstrate ensure that advisers give customers the advice and guidance they need to participate in, and contribute well to, their local and national communities.

The governance of the provider

- A board of trustees has very good oversight of the quality and effectiveness of the advice and guidance service provided by EDT. Managers and directors provide them with detailed reports about the provision and they use these very effectively to challenge and support staff to improve.
- Trustees take an active interest in what advisers do by, for example, visiting and supporting area teams, taking part in development activities and supporting reward and recognition programmes. This enables them to gain further insight into the strengths and challenges of the provision and they use this well to support staff and managers.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and managers have provided comprehensive training and support for advisers. Advisers focus well on the safety of their customers, including online safety, and know how to protect customers from radicalisation and extremism. They know and use EDT's referral process well.
- Managers protect the welfare of their staff very well through appropriate risk assessment and duty of care by, for example, providing counselling support for advisers who have dealt with emotionally challenging incidents. They ensure the safety of both staff and customers by completing rigorous risk assessments of the premises used.
- Advisers are adept at recognising when a customer might be in danger or is experiencing a safeguarding issue and they take very effective actions to provide very good support, guidance and referral to external agencies. Advisers also provide customers with extremely valuable guidance on the dangers of using social media and the possible consequences of some actions that might exclude them from certain jobs.

Quality of information, advice and guidance

Good

- Advisers are experienced and well qualified. They use their good interpersonal skills and expertise to quickly create a good rapport with customers. They provide very effective personal support to help customers deal with a range of barriers to employment and have good links with local specialist agencies, including those who support ex-offenders, those affected by substance misuse and redundancy and lone parents.
- Advisers skilfully question customers to assess their starting points and use the information to plan sessions tailored to meet their specific needs. They quickly establish essential information about previous jobs, education, training and interests and use this as the basis for further discussion.
- Advisers encourage customers to improve their English, mathematics and ICT skills very

effectively. They explain why these skills are important to employers and actively promote the range of options available, including online learning and course attendance. Advisers emphasise the importance of updating these skills where customers may have achieved qualifications a long time ago.

- Advisers promote equality and diversity very effectively. They are sensitive to customers' concerns about the perceived barriers that may exist, for example because of their age, gender or history of offending. Advisers make sure that customers are aware of the laws protecting them from discrimination. Advisers are non-judgemental in their approach and use language carefully to avoid stereotypes and promote the rights of individuals.
- Advisers use good-quality resources to help customers progress. They make very effective use of laptop and tablet computers in sessions, including accessing the National Careers Service website and a wide range of other online resources. Sessions take place in highly accessible locations, including Jobcentre Plus offices, with private rooms and spaces for confidential discussions.
- Advisers provide detailed feedback to customers that boosts their confidence and helps them improve. For example, detailed comments on customers' curriculum vitae (CV) help them to make swift improvements and tailor their applications to specific job vacancies or work sectors. Advisers are also skilful in helping customers to recognise and build on their achievements and identify their transferable skills, such as those developed when caring for children. However, in a minority of group and one-to-one sessions, advisers do not check learning or recap sufficiently to ensure that customers have understood and can use the information provided effectively in their next actions.
- Customers benefit from advisers' detailed knowledge of the local and regional labour markets. Advisers have up-to-date information on the latest employment trends and specific job vacancies, such as new and expanding companies. The service uses social media well to distribute labour market information. Advisers actively promote voluntary work, including in charity shops, so that customers can gain experience and contribute to the community.
- Advisers are familiar with local training opportunities and direct customers readily to suitable courses, based on their personal knowledge of the provision and its accessibility to customers. They promptly enrol customers onto courses during their advice sessions, where appropriate.
- Advisers do not always develop customers' independence effectively. In a small number of group and one-to-one sessions, they direct customers too much and tell them what to do, rather than giving information to help them arrive at their own conclusions. Advisers complete tasks for customers to meet their immediate needs, instead of developing their skills to become more self-sufficient in the long term. For example, a small minority of customers who speak English as an additional language do not develop sufficient independence in managing their career plans.
- Advisers, in a small minority of cases, do not capture discussions and agreed actions fully in customers' skills action plans, resulting in a lack of challenge. For example, customers agree to improve their English and mathematics but advisers do not record specific actions to ensure that this happens. Advisers do not consistently capture in the action plan all of the relevant points from their discussions with customers. They fail to ensure that customers are clear as to why certain actions are not included in the plan. On

occasions, actions recorded are not specific enough, such as 'research employers'.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

- Customers significantly improve their confidence levels and self-assurance from their information, advice and guidance sessions. Advisers' positive reinforcement of customers' work-related experience and transferable skills helps them understand the employment opportunities open to them.
- Customers are more motivated after advice sessions to explore their employment and learning opportunities further and to commit wholeheartedly to their goals. Despite the significant barriers many customers face, they are markedly more positive following sessions because they receive strong encouragement and support from advisers.
- Customers progress appropriately to a range of training and certification opportunities to further their careers, based on the highly accurate information and advice they receive. For example, customers undertake essential qualifications such as health and safety and food hygiene to enable them to enter the construction, security and hospitality sectors.
- Customers develop vital new skills and enhanced confidence for creating and improving their CV. They are considerably more able to present their transferable life skills and other positive attributes because of the guidance they receive from advisers. For example, advisers instruct customers how to write a unique personal summary, while keeping their CV short and appealing to employers.
- Following their advice sessions, the vast majority of customers make excellent progress in their career plans. They understand the importance of improving their English, mathematics and ICT skills and become motivated to access courses and other support.
- Customers' punctuality at individual sessions and workshops is very good. Customers arrive highly motivated and ready to participate fully with advisers and other customers. All customers respond very positively to advisers, conduct themselves well and show respect and positive attitudes which mirror those modelled by the advisers. Although attendance at a few sessions can be variable, EDT is developing a range of suitable strategies to improve this.
- Advisers work in highly effective ways to safeguard customers, including taking care with their personal information and explaining to customers how they can protect themselves online. For example, advisers provide customers with extremely valuable tips on their use of social media so that they do not exclude themselves from the job market. Advisers help customers to feel comfortable in sharing details about their personal situations so that they receive the most helpful advice.
- Advisers are vigilant about customers' welfare and the dangers of radicalisation and extremism and they report any concerns and respond effectively when they arise.

Outcomes for customers

Outstanding

- Customers make excellent progress relative to a wide range of starting points. They develop their skills and knowledge, acquire relevant qualifications and improve their understanding of what they need to do next to gain employment or progress in their

chosen career extremely well.

- EDT consistently exceeds its targets in relation to progression into jobs and/or learning. It also exceeds its targets for customers taking responsibility for managing their own careers.
- The large majority of customers are highly satisfied with the quality of service, advice and guidance they receive and they make excellent progress against the actions agreed in their skills action plans. EDT makes excellent use of labour market information to inform customers of potential employment routes and to target large employers in danger of making staff redundant, so that they can intervene and support those employees quickly.
- Managers place a strong emphasis on targeting identified priority groups and make very good use of specialist subcontractors with experience of working in communities and regions with high numbers of individuals from these groups. Managers monitor the performance of priority groups in detail and take appropriate and decisive actions to improve or remedy identified weaknesses. The gaps between the performance of priority groups and other customers are small.
- Advisers are skilful in motivating customers to take responsibility for achieving agreed actions. They also use a variety of strategies and positive reinforcement to support customers in overcoming personal or practical barriers.

Provider details

Unique reference number	1236924
Type of provider	National Careers Service
Director	Laura Bell
Telephone number	0191 334 9950
Website	www.educationdevelopmenttrust.com

Provider information at the time of the inspection

At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Building Futures East CEP Associates DiSC (Developing initiatives Supporting Communities) Ingeus Training Jobs, Education and Training (JET) Learning Concepts Ltd The Hope Foundation
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Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the programme director, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans. Inspectors used group and individual interviews and online questionnaires to gather the views of customers and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed group learning sessions and one-to-one advice and guidance reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

Inspection team

Tim Gardner, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Pat Hornsby	Ofsted Inspector
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