

# Nottinghamshire Training Network

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates

9–12 May 2017

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

## Summary of key findings

### This is a provider that requires improvement

- Previous leaders' and managers' actions to improve the weaknesses identified at previous inspections were ineffective in driving improvements in the quality of training and outcomes for apprentices.
- Leaders fail to ensure that subcontractors meet the additional learning needs of all learners and apprentices.
- Managers collect inadequate information on the progression to employment, further education and training of adult learners.
- Many tutors and assessors place insufficient focus on the development of adult learners' and apprentices' English and mathematics skills.
- Too many tutors make insufficient use of the results of assessment to support learners and apprentices to make rapid progress from their starting points.
- Too many tutors are insufficiently confident to reinforce effectively the dangers of radicalisation. As a result, learners' and apprentices' recollection and understanding of these topics are insufficient.
- Apprentices receive insufficient advice and guidance to help them plan their next steps.
- Apprenticeship achievement rates are low

### The provider has the following strengths

- Leaders and managers have recently taken effective action to increase the proportion of apprentices who achieve their apprenticeship framework.
- Leaders and managers have ensured the successful introduction of traineeship programmes in the current academic year.
- Tutors make good use of work placements and experience to help trainees develop useful employment-related skills.
- Learners and apprentices develop good practical skills which are valued by employers.
- The large majority of adult learners and trainees achieve all of their agreed learning objectives and qualifications.

## Full report

### Information about the provider

- Nottinghamshire Training Network (NTN) is an independent learning provider based in Mansfield. It is a membership organisation of 77 independent learning and skills training providers. NTN provides apprenticeships, traineeships and adult learning programmes for employed and unemployed learners across England. The large majority of training is delivered through a network of 17 subcontractors.
- The majority of learners and apprentices are aged over 19. Many come from disadvantaged backgrounds and have poor experiences of previous education. Many adult learners are unemployed.
- NTN was sold to new owners in September 2016. A new board of directors is now in place. Senior management arrangements have been reviewed and restructured.
- NTN supports training in six subject areas, with the largest numbers in construction and civil engineering services, business administration, health and social care, and warehousing and storage.

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

- Ensure that the newly appointed leaders and managers take swift, decisive actions to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Ensure that all subcontractors are held accountable for improving all learners' and apprentices' outcomes.
- Ensure that all staff promote British values to learners and apprentices and secure their understanding of the risks of radicalisation and its potential impact on their lives and work.
- Improve the identification of individual apprentices' additional learning needs and ensure that all apprentices receive the support they require to succeed.
- Improve the quality of advice and guidance for apprentices, so that they are consistently clear about how their apprenticeship fits their longer-term career aspirations and are confident about planning their next steps.
- Secure improvements in the management of English and mathematics to ensure that the teaching of these subjects is good.
- Collect full information on adult learners' progression into employment, further education or training, to enable managers to measure the effectiveness and appropriateness of this provision.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that tutors and assessors:
  - plan a range of activities and tasks that enable all learners and apprentices to progress swiftly from their starting points
  - provide high-quality written feedback to learners and apprentices so that they are clear about the standards of work expected of them, what they have achieved and

what they need to do in order to excel in their work.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Leaders and managers did not take swift and effective action to improve the weaknesses identified at previous inspections. The proportion of apprentices who achieved their qualifications in the two years prior to this inspection was low. The quality of too much teaching, learning and assessment is not yet good, and a minority of apprentices do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Leaders fail to ensure that subcontractors meet the additional learning needs of all learners and apprentices. Managers do not collect sufficient information about the offer, take-up and impact of additional learning support to ensure that adult learners and apprentices receive the support they require to progress swiftly and achieve well.
- Leaders have failed to ensure that tutors and assessors promote and develop effectively adult learners' and apprentices' skills in English and mathematics. Too many adult learners and apprentices do not recognise the value of improving their skills. Achievement rates of functional skills qualifications are low.
- Managers collect insufficient information on adult learners' progression to employment, further education and training. Managers do not ensure that all subcontractors understand the effectiveness of the training that they offer by monitoring the destinations of adult learners and apprentices when they leave training.
- The newly appointed senior leaders and managers have taken pains to understand the provision and accurately identify the strengths and weaknesses of teaching, learning and assessment. The most recent self-assessment report reflects almost all of the strengths and weaknesses identified by inspectors. The associated quality improvement plan contains a range of appropriate action points, but does not yet contain specific, measurable success milestones.
- Improved arrangements to carry out observations of teaching, learning and assessment are in place. Managers plan to bring about improvements based on the results of these observations and feedback from learners and apprentices; it is too early to judge the impact of these actions.
- Leaders and managers have taken effective action to increase significantly the proportion of apprentices who achieve. Senior managers have discontinued recruiting apprentices through underperforming subcontractors. Managers have improved the formal monitoring of progress by individual learners and apprentices. Monthly caseload management meetings with each subcontractor focus strongly on apprentices' overall achievement rates and those within the planned timeframe. As a result, apprenticeship achievement rates have improved significantly in the months prior to this inspection.
- Leaders and managers ensure that the newly introduced traineeship programmes are well planned to meet the needs of learners. As a result, outcomes for trainees are good.
- Leaders have established effective links with a number of local enterprise partnerships, national employers and small- and medium-sized employers to offer a range of programmes intended to meet national, regional and local priorities and skills needs. The provision of a range of adult learning programmes that enable learners from disadvantaged backgrounds to participate in education, or gain skills for employment, is a

direct result of these links.

## **The governance of the provider**

- The newly formed board of directors and senior management team accurately identify almost all existing weaknesses, such as the relative poor outcomes for female, Black and Asian apprentices and the insufficient understanding by learners and apprentices of the risks of radicalisation.
- Directors are well informed about the performance of each subcontractor and have taken decisive action to remove those who underperform.
- Company directors have agreed appropriate action plans to drive up the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and outcomes for all apprentices. Substantial improvements have been made to the rate of progress by apprentices with their learning and overall apprenticeship achievement rates in the first half of the current academic year. However, it is too early to judge the sustained impact of these actions.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The designated safeguarding officer provides effective leadership across the subcontractor network to ensure the safety of learners and apprentices. Tutors, assessors and other appropriate staff regularly receive training to reinforce their knowledge and understanding of safeguarding principles and procedures. Any safeguarding concerns are investigated and resolved appropriately.
- Managers ensure that each subcontractor carries out comprehensive checks on staff and keeps accurate records of enhanced checks.
- Learners' and apprentices' understanding of safeguarding topics, including staying safe online, is sound.
- Tutors and assessors check and maintain the health and safety of learners and apprentices in their workplaces regularly. Apprentices demonstrate safe working practices. Employers are aware of their responsibilities and how to raise concerns, if they arise.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

## **Requires improvement**

- Assessors do not have consistently high expectations of what apprentices can achieve. Too many apprentices lack motivation because they do not receive sufficient encouragement to ensure that they make a good enough rate of progress. Recent changes in the management of subcontractors have resulted in improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, but it is not yet consistently good.
- Tutors and assessors do not make consistently good use of the results gained from the assessment of starting points to plan learning that meets learners' and apprentices' needs and capabilities. As a result, too few of the most able learners and apprentices are not challenged to excel.
- Tutors and assessors do not always check learners' level of understanding sufficiently. In a few instances, assessors do not allow learners sufficient opportunity to ask questions or

to demonstrate what they are learning.

- A minority of tutors and assessors set targets for learners that are insufficiently challenging and that do not focus on the development of their wider skills. A minority of apprentices have not made sufficient progress and are unlikely to complete their qualifications in the planned period. However, an increasing proportion of apprentices are now making a good rate of progress.
- Tutors and assessors do not always provide learners with sufficiently detailed feedback on their work and progress. In a minority of cases, assessors do not clearly detail what apprentices need to do to improve. A few learners and apprentices do not have a clear understanding of the level of progress they are making and what they have left to do. Learners on traineeships receive particularly effective verbal and written feedback, and this helps them to understand what they need to do to improve the standard of their work.
- The majority of tutors and assessors place insufficient priority on helping learners to improve their English and mathematics skills. For example, apprentices who already have the minimum qualifications in these subjects are not encouraged to extend their skills and understanding. As a result, too few learners are sufficiently well prepared for their next steps in their careers, or learning. However, learners on traineeships make good progress in English and mathematics, which helps them to prepare for employment.
- The majority of assessors have good vocational experience and subject knowledge. However, they do not always use this well enough to make sure that all learners make the progress expected of them. For example, a small number of construction apprentices, who speak English as an additional language, are not always able to follow instructions clearly because their English skills are not good enough.
- Tutors and assessors test and validate learners' competence and progress by making good use of a broad range of evidence, such as witness testimonies, direct observation, digital recordings and professional discussions.
- Tutors provide good pastoral support to help learners on traineeships to complete their programmes and support these learners with additional needs particularly well. Assessors are very flexible and make out-of-hours workplace visits to accommodate apprentices' shift patterns and weekend working, to ensure that they assess work practice.
- Assessors have good relationships with employers and keep them well informed about the progress of their apprentices. Employers value highly the contribution that apprentices are making to their businesses. For example, apprentices in management roles have introduced sophisticated technology to track deliveries and make more efficient use of resources. A good proportion of intermediate-level apprentices progress on to advanced level courses, gain promotion at work and are given greater responsibility.
- Staff skilfully ensure that learners develop a good understanding of the diverse communities in which they live and work. They make sure that learners explore and overcome prejudices. For example, helping learners to ensure that they get along well with other people in their workplace and recognise differences.
- Too many tutors are insufficiently confident to reinforce the dangers of radicalisation effectively. As a result, learners' and apprentices' recollection and understanding of relevant topics are insufficient.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Requires improvement

- As a result of tutors' and assessors' lack of confidence in supporting English and mathematics, learners and apprentices often work towards English and mathematics qualifications at an insufficiently challenging level.
- Few learners are able to express confidently their responsibilities under the 'Prevent' duty, or clearly recognise the threat from extremism and how to protect themselves from radicalisation.
- Classroom and workplace behaviours are good.
- Attendance and punctuality rates on almost all programmes are good. A small number of learners on employability courses are insufficiently challenged about their late arrivals.
- Many apprentices are ambitious in their careers and gain promotion within their workplace as a result of their training.
- Adult learners, many of whom have poor previous experiences of formal education or significant difficulties with learning, enjoy their courses and take pride in their work.
- Learners develop their self-confidence as a result of their learning.
- Learners and apprentices develop good practical skills which are valued by employers. Many apprentices are able to demonstrate their new skills, including in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT), in their workplaces and take on extended job roles and greater responsibilities. For example, health and social care apprentices learn how to assess pressure areas effectively and reduce the incidence of pressure sores in vulnerable clients.
- Tutors and assessors provide adult learners and the majority of apprentices with sufficient independent information, advice and guidance to help them make decisions about their next steps in training and employment. However, a few apprentices do not understand the requirements of their training programme, or how their learning will support their long-term career aspirations.
- Learners and apprentices are confident in their understanding of equality of opportunity, and demonstrate positive attitudes towards diversity in modern Britain. They use appropriate language and clearly relate their learning on these themes to their workplace activities.
- Learners feel safe and are confident in keeping themselves safe when using online learning resources and using social networks.

## Outcomes for learners

## Requires improvement

- Apprenticeship achievement rates have been consistently low over time. The proportion of apprentices who achieved all parts of their framework fell in 2014/15 and was very low; many learners made slow progress towards achieving their main qualification.
- Groups of apprentices achieve at different rates. For example, female apprentices, those of Black or Asian origin and those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are less likely to succeed than other groups.
- Achievement rates are high on intermediate-level apprenticeships in engineering and

manufacturing, and advanced apprenticeships in construction, planning and the built environment. However, achievement rates on intermediate-level health and social care apprenticeships are very low.

- Too few apprentices complete their training within the planned duration of their programme.
- First-time pass rates on functional skills examinations are too low.
- In the six months prior to this inspection, the new directors and managers placed a much greater emphasis on accelerating apprentices' progress and on their completing all aspects of their apprenticeship frameworks. Current overall apprenticeship achievement rates compared with those at the same point in 2015/16 show substantial improvement. The majority of current apprentices are now making at least the progress expected of them. The gaps in achievement between groups of apprentices have begun to close in the months prior to this inspection.
- Outcomes for adult learners are good. The large majority of those on adult learning programmes achieve all of their agreed learning objectives. Qualification achievement rates for adult learners are very high.
- Managers have little information about the destinations of learners on employability programmes, as subcontractors carry out inadequate tracking and monitoring of their subsequent progression.
- Outcomes on the recently introduced traineeships are good. Almost all trainees achieve their identified learning objectives. A large proportion of the small number of trainees who have started the programme have already progressed to work, work with training or further education.

## Types of provision

### Apprenticeships

### Requires improvement

- In many instances, assessors provide insufficient support for apprentices with identified additional learning support needs to help them to succeed.
- Assessors do not sufficiently consider information on apprentices' prior experience and learning when drawing up learning plans. As a result, a small proportion of apprentices make slow progress and the most able apprentices do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Assessors are insufficiently confident to support learners with the English and mathematics element of their framework. A few subcontractors delay providing formal support for functional skills qualifications until the end of their apprenticeship programmes. Assessors often fail to develop English and mathematics skills in the contexts of apprentices' job roles and settings. As a result, many learners make slower progress than expected. Very few apprentices work towards qualifications that exceed the minimum requirements of their apprenticeship framework.
- Apprentices demonstrate good communication skills, particularly in their responses to oral questions during assessment. However, the small number of apprentices who speak English as an additional language develop their skills in spoken English very slowly.



- Assessors provide appropriate initial advice and guidance to apprentices about their training and how it supports their employment. For instance, health and social care apprentices are clear as to how achievement of their apprenticeship will support their applications for nurse training. However, a small number do not fully understand the programme that they are on and how this will support their longer-term aspirations.
- A large proportion of apprentices are well motivated and become increasingly adept at researching topics of interest through online research, and occasional use of libraries, to prepare effectively for assessments.
- The majority of assessors use their occupational expertise to provide a range of learning activities that engage and motivate apprentices. However, target setting for a few apprentices is inadequate, resulting in them making slow progress.
- Apprentices develop good knowledge and valuable occupational technical skills. For example, a catering apprentice is rightfully proud of his high-level technical skills in preparing fish dishes.
- The majority of employers support learning very effectively. Many provide a wide range of additional on- and off-the-job training that helps apprentices develop useful occupational and personal skills. Employers report that apprentices have a positive impact on the growth of their businesses.
- Apprentices develop a good understanding of health and safety and general health and well-being topics.
- Apprentices have a good understanding of equality and diversity and of wider British values. However, their understanding of the risks associated with radicalisation and how this might affect their lives and work is weak.

## Traineeships

**Good**

- NTN began offering traineeships in January 2017. The traineeship programme consists of an eight-week employability programme and a period of work experience. Trainees work towards a personal development qualification that prepares them well for their next steps. Trainees benefit from lessons to improve their English and mathematics skills throughout the programme.
- Tutors use the results of an assessment of each trainee's prior experience and academic starting point at the beginning of the programme to agree appropriate learning objectives and plan individual learning support. However, a small number of the most able trainees are insufficiently challenged and they make slower progress than expected.
- Tutors deliver lively and interesting sessions which learners enjoy and most participate in enthusiastically. Tutors use a good range of resources and activities that maintain trainees' interest. As a result, trainees quickly develop the confidence to participate in group discussions. For example, after watching a video clip, trainees challenged each other confidently about staying safe online and when using social media.
- Trainees develop their personal and employability skills well. In particular, tutors ensure that learners understand and demonstrate the behaviours expected by potential employers, including good timekeeping, teamwork and showing respect for others. Trainees generally demonstrate high standards of behaviour.

- Tutors make good use of a wide range of work placements to help trainees develop very useful personal and employment-related skills. Managers work very well with local and national employers to ensure that work placements are well matched to each trainee's ability and ambitions. For example, a trainee on a warehousing placement now understands the need to carefully pick and pack goods in preparation for despatch to customers. Trainees on an ICT placement visit primary schools where they work confidently with young children, teaching them to use digital technology successfully to draw and print images.
- Assessment is good. Achievements are recorded accurately and trainees benefit from frequent reviews of their progress, where they can discuss both personal and academic aspects of their training. Targets set at reviews are specific and support almost all trainees to make good progress. Tutors provide trainees with detailed feedback to help them understand how to improve their work.
- Trainees feel safe and know how to raise any safeguarding concerns in the training centres and work placements. Tutors very successfully promote an ethos of inclusion and tolerance, and trainees and staff members treat each other with a high level of respect.
- Support for trainees is good. Where a need is identified, trainees benefit from good specialist support from a range of local partners on topics such as housing support, substance misuse and financial support. Tutors support trainees who have additional learning support needs, such as dyslexia, well. Most trainees are clear about the next steps on their career pathways.

## Provider details

Unique reference number	58161
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16–18/19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	1029
Principal/CEO	Mr Syed Jafrey
Telephone number	01623 404341
Website	<a href="http://www.ntn.org.co.uk">www.ntn.org.co.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 or above	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
	15	118	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	27	369	-	248	-	24		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	15		19		34			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	-							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	-							
Funding received from:	Education and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	ARS; Blue Apple; Canal Engineering; DBC; Enable; Ensis; JC Training; Mark Solutions; Momentum; Total Training; Training 4 Careers; Vista Training; Zenith Training							

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of quality and operations, as nominee. 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 learners 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.

## Inspection team

Gerard McGrath, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Dan Grant	Ofsted Inspector
Gareth Fallows	Ofsted Inspector
Maggie Fobister	Ofsted Inspector
Sara Hunter	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Gay	Ofsted Inspector

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