

North Liverpool Regeneration Company Ltd

Community learning and skills

Inspection dates

28 June – 4 July 2017

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

Summary of key findings

This is an inadequate provider

- Safeguarding is ineffective.
- Apprentices have an insufficient awareness of the dangers associated with radicalisation and extremism.
- Leaders and managers have failed to maintain the strengths and address the key areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection, leading to a decline in the standards of education and training.
- Leaders' and managers' planning of the curriculum is inadequate; the large majority of apprentices are not employed, which is a key principle of being an apprentice.
- Trustees, leaders and managers have presided over a significant decline in achievement rates since the previous inspection, which are now low.
- Trustees do not have a sufficient oversight of how the organisation is performing, leading to them not holding leaders and managers to account for the significant deterioration of standards since the previous inspection.
- Tutors do not develop apprentices' written and spoken skills throughout the duration of their programme.
- Managers' monitoring of subcontractors is poor. They place a disproportionate emphasis on the achievement of financial and recruitment targets rather than improving the standards of education and training of subcontractors.
- Managers have failed to ensure that apprentices receive impartial information, advice and guidance to inform them of the opportunities available to them throughout their apprenticeship; less than half of apprentices gain sustained employment following the completion of their apprenticeship.
- Tutors do not set sufficiently challenging targets for apprentices to achieve. The vast majority of construction apprentices make slow progress on their apprenticeship programmes and do not develop the skills that they need to gain meaningful employment in the construction industry.
- The actions that leaders and managers take to improve standards are not rigorous enough; self-assessment reports are imprecise and improvement plans are cursory, leading to managers not articulating to staff what aspects of the organisation need to be prioritised to deliver improvements to teaching and learning.

The provider has the following strengths

- This provider has no strengths.

Full report

Information about the provider

- North Liverpool Regeneration Company (NLRC) is a non-profit-making company. NLRC's aim is to provide education and training, support business development and to provide community facilities. NLRC has an Education and Skills Funding Agency contract to provide apprenticeships at intermediate and advanced level in construction and childcare. Construction accounts for the vast majority of all apprenticeships provided by NLRC.
- North Liverpool is among the top 10% most deprived areas in England; almost one in five of the population who are working age are not employed. The managing director has overall responsibility for the apprenticeship training programme. A project manager, supported by a range of external consultants, is responsible for the operational management of the apprenticeship programme.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- As a matter of the utmost urgency, trustees, leaders and managers should review safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure that all apprentices are kept safe. They should do this by ensuring that:
 - the designated safeguarding officer receives the appropriate training to allow them to execute their role proficiently
 - the security arrangements for access to the training centre are reviewed and enhanced to ensure that only authorised personnel can gain access to learning environments
 - all staff follow NLRC's policies and procedures by adequately recording and swiftly referring safeguarding concerns to the designated safeguarding officer as soon as possible. This will allow the designated safeguarding officer to have a precise record of all safeguarding referrals and enable accurate reports be sent to the board of trustees to inform them of safeguarding incidents throughout the course of the year
 - staff inform and deepen apprentices' understanding to the dangers of radicalisation and extremism throughout apprentices' programmes to ensure that they have an understanding of these risks.
- Ensure that all apprentices are employed so that they meet the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship.
- Trustees, leaders and managers should, as a matter of urgency, prioritise the improvement of teaching, learning and assessment throughout the organisation to reverse the significant decline in the standards of education and training since the previous inspection and ultimately improve the achievement of apprentices.
- Tutors should ensure that the results of assessments completed at the start of apprentices' courses are used appropriately to plan learning to meet their specific learning requirements. Furthermore, tutors should then use these plans to monitor thoroughly the progress that apprentices make on their apprenticeship. Particular focus should be placed on developing apprentices' written and spoken skills, to assist them in being more articulate with peers and colleagues alike.

- Managers should ensure that regular meetings with subcontractors place significant emphasis on the improvement of teaching, learning and assessment rather than the current focus on financial income and recruitment targets.
- Leaders and managers should ensure that all apprentices receive impartial information, advice and guidance throughout their apprenticeship programme to enable them to understand the opportunities that are available to them within their chosen sector.
- Trustees, leaders and managers should ensure that the self-assessment report is accurate and wholly reflective of the organisation. The subsequent improvement plan should clearly identify the weaknesses of the organisation and set specific actions to be completed within planned timescales, which are monitored diligently to ensure swift improvement.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Trustees, leaders and managers have failed to maintain the strengths or address the key areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. They have presided over a significant decline in standards since the previous inspection and, as a result, the proportion of apprentices who achieve their qualification is very low. Trustees have failed to hold leaders and managers to account for the deterioration of the quality of education and training at NLRC.
- Leaders' and managers' planning of the curriculum is inadequate. The large majority of current apprentices are not in employment and so the programme does not meet the requirements of an apprenticeship, nor does it meet the Education and Skills Funding Agency funding rules. Managers do not place sufficient priority on the development of apprentices' written and spoken skills. Many apprentices, when questioned by inspectors, did not realise that English and mathematics were a component of their apprenticeship, nor were they aware that they were required to take examinations in these subjects as part of their programme.
- The monitoring of the quality of the apprenticeship provision at the subcontractor is poor. NLRC's managers identify this weakness in their most recent self-assessment report. While there is regular communication between the subcontractor and NLRC to oversee the management of the contract, including financial summaries, compliance audits and new enrolment targets, there is insufficient focus on actions required to improve the standards of education and training at the subcontractor.
- The self-assessment report is insufficiently evaluative and does not accurately reflect the standard of education and training at NLRC. Managers have failed to identify clearly the weaknesses, and many of the judgements are overly optimistic and inaccurate. Managers do not ensure that they put effective quality improvement plans in place quickly enough. Consequently the progress that managers make in improving their courses is too slow. The targets that managers set in their improvement plan are imprecise and do not assess the impact of their actions on the improvements that need to be made, nor are clear targets set for when actions should be completed. As a result, managers are unable to diligently monitor what progress is being made in improving the standards of education and training.
- Managers' monitoring of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is ineffective. While observations of learning activity take place, the content of the resulting reports does not precisely evaluate the standard of education and training that apprentices receive, nor do the reports identify to what extent apprentices make the progress of which they are capable. Consequently, the subsequent action plans that managers complete following observations do not detail what the tutor needs to do, or what support they will receive to improve their practice in the classroom or the workshop.
- Leaders and managers do not hold staff to account for their poor performance over a prolonged period of time successfully. Managers fail to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to set or monitor strategic and operational targets for staff to achieve. Improvement actions identified, following observations of teaching and learning, do not link to performance management discussions nor is there any coherent plan to

improve the quality of education and training across the organisation through continuous professional development activities.

- Leaders fail to ensure that apprentices receive impartial careers guidance throughout their courses. While apprentices receive information about the sector in which they work from external organisations such as trade unions at the start of their programmes, they do not receive ongoing support throughout their programme to assist them in making suitable decisions about their future career choices.

The governance of the provider

- Trustees have been ineffectual in holding leaders and senior managers to account for the performance of NLRC, culminating in a significant deterioration in the standard of education and training since the previous inspection.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Trustees, leaders and managers have failed to ensure that the current and previous holders of the designated safeguarding officer role have received appropriate training to allow them to execute effectively their role within the organisation.
- The arrangements to ensure the security and safety of apprentices are inadequate. On three occasions during the inspection, inspectors entered a training facility, located on a public thoroughfare, without challenge and gained access to classrooms and workshops where apprentices were located.
- While there are appropriate policies and procedures in place to protect and support apprentices undertaking their apprenticeship, these are not followed by staff. Staff do not always disclose incidents to the designated safeguarding officer or fully record them to ensure that apprentices are given the appropriate support. Inspectors identified a number of concerns about apprentices' safety and well-being that were not disclosed to the designated safeguarding officer.
- All staff have completed appropriate training on safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. However, they do not use this knowledge to ensure that apprentices understand how to stay safe in the training centre and their communities. Apprentices do not understand the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. Consequently, apprentices are unable to see how these risks have an impact on them in the workplace and in their personal lives, which makes them vulnerable.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- More than four out of five of the 69 apprentices at the time of the inspection are enrolled on construction-based apprenticeships, evenly distributed between plastering, brickwork and joinery. Most of the remaining apprentices are completing childcare apprenticeships.
- Managers do not ensure that the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship are met. The vast majority of construction apprentices, who account for most of the apprentices, are not employed. Consequently, they do not receive their entitlement of on-

the-job training, limiting the skills and experience that they should acquire on an apprenticeship.

- Tutors do not plan learning to meet the specific requirements of all apprentices. They do not use the results of assessments, completed at the start of the programme, to design and develop apprentices' programmes. On too many occasions, apprentices complete the same practical and written tasks despite their differing starting points. These tasks predominantly focus on the completion of workbooks and question sheets. As a result, apprentices are not developing practical industry-standard skills quickly enough. Apprentices attend dull, repetitive lessons, which fail to challenge the most able apprentices to complete work of a higher standard.
- Assessors do not routinely set meaningful actions for apprentices to complete at progress reviews, which limits the progress that apprentices make on their apprenticeship. Assessors set targets that are unclear and perfunctory and do not provide apprentices with sufficient information on what they need to do to develop their skills further. For example, in one review, an apprentice on a plastering programme was targeted with preparing for assessment of a unit on a given date, without sufficient detail on how they should do this.
- Managers fail to ensure that apprentices have the opportunity to develop their vocational skills in the workplace. The majority of construction apprentices have been on an apprenticeship for over eight months and have yet to develop their skills with an employer in an industrial setting. This limits the skills they acquire and the experience they gain on their apprenticeship and, consequently, they make slow progress.
- Tutors do not use the assessment they complete at the start of an apprenticeship programme effectively to develop apprentices' skills in English and mathematics. Tutors are not aware of apprentices' literacy and numeracy targets so are unable to provide effective support for apprentices to achieve them. While spelling errors are highlighted, the majority of written work contains frequent grammatical errors that are not identified by the tutor, nor is any support provided to apprentices to improve their writing. For example, there is regular misuse of capital letters that remains unchecked and, as a result, apprentices are not aware of the errors made and continue to repeat these mistakes.
- Staff do not include apprentices in meaningful discussions on issues relating to equality and diversity sufficiently. They do not always promote equality of opportunity or apprentices' understanding of diversity effectively. Consequently, apprentices demonstrate a very limited understanding of the wider issues of equality and diversity. When asked, most apprentices can only respond by stating that they need to treat people fairly on construction sites.
- Apprentices in plastering develop good practical skills in the training centre and those apprentices now on site apply them well in the workplace. Apprentices are able to plaster walls and ceilings independently to a good industrial standard. Employers value the skills apprentices bring to their business and support apprentices to develop these skills further by providing opportunities to practise plastering techniques in the workplace.
- The very small proportion of apprentices on the subcontracted programme in childcare are making good progress. Assessment practices are effective in improving their knowledge and skills, which help to enhance their performance in the workplace. Apprentices enjoy and value their learning and have a good understanding of issues

affecting their well-being and those surrounding equality and diversity.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

- Apprentices, in their one-to-one meetings with their training officers, are not involved sufficiently in meaningful discussions relating to safeguarding and their well-being. While apprentices say that they feel safe, they are unable to articulate any understanding of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism in the communities where they live or at the training centre. Apprentices improve their understanding of online safety through group tutorial sessions. For example, apprentices know how to amend their privacy settings and disable the functions that allow others to know their location.
- Apprentices' punctuality in the training centre is poor. Tutors do not challenge apprentices arriving late to lessons or workshop sessions sufficiently. Tutors routinely allow apprentices to take longer scheduled breaks than are permitted, resulting in learning objectives planned for the session not being completed and, as a result, apprentices do not appreciate the importance of timekeeping when they gain employment within their chosen sector.
- The vast majority of apprentices do not benefit from employment while undertaking their apprenticeship. These apprentices are predominantly based in the training centre for prolonged periods of time, which limits their skill development in a realistic working environment. Furthermore, the lack of a meaningful work placement precludes them from acquiring important skills such as working in a team, solving problems in a construction context and working to industry-standard timescales.
- Too many apprentices do not receive sufficient ongoing impartial career information, advice and guidance. Many apprentices who have been based in the training centre for long periods of time, and have had very little engagement with the construction sector, are despondent about the opportunities that are available to them due to the poor advice and guidance that they have received from staff.
- While tutors place a high priority on safe working practices in the construction industry, a small minority of apprentices put themselves, their peers and tutors in danger due to inappropriate actions in the construction workshop. For example, a few apprentices use their mobile phones while tutors are providing important demonstrations in the workshop, while others do not show sufficient understanding in the use of potentially dangerous work equipment.
- Apprentices do not develop their skills in English sufficiently well. Too many apprentices do not make the progress that they should in their writing and speaking skills. On too many occasions, apprentices' completed written work is illegible, incorporating frequent grammatical errors and poor punctuation. Tutors do not challenge this poor use of English, which results in the same mistakes being made throughout apprentices' portfolios.
- Most apprentices on plastering apprenticeships develop new skills in relation to mathematics which are relevant to their vocational skills training. For example, apprentices calculate the surface area of rooms that need to be plastered to ensure that they have the correct volume to complete the job.

Outcomes for learners

Inadequate

- Trustees, leaders and managers have presided over a significant decline in achievements since the previous inspection. The proportion of apprentices who completed their apprenticeship on time in 2015/16 was low and significantly below the low national rate for similar providers. Almost two thirds of all apprentices who were due to complete their apprenticeship failed to do so. Consequently, too many apprentices did not develop the skills or attain the goals that they set out to achieve at the start of their apprenticeship.
- The vast majority of current apprentices are making slow progress on their programmes due to poorly planned learning in many of the subject areas across the organisation. Data provided by managers indicates that the proportion of apprentices who will achieve their apprenticeship on time will decline further in 2016/17. As the large majority of construction apprentices are not in employment, this prevents them from developing new skills in the workplace or honing skills that they develop in the training centre.
- The development of apprentices' practical skills and completion of their National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) is slow. Too many apprentices do not complete work that meets the requirements of the qualification or the standards expected in industry. For example, apprentices who were making a timber profile for use by apprentice bricklayers in constructing walls did not produce it to the correct specifications to reflect brick depth. The profile they produced was to a poor standard, with inaccurate saw cuts, which was of no use to the bricklayers.
- Tutors focus on apprentices acquiring the construction skills certification scheme (CSCS) card, the compulsory certificate required by the industry to work on a building site. Just over one half of apprentices have successfully gained the CSCS card.
- Too few apprentices progress to full-time employment once they have completed their apprenticeship; less than half of all apprentices who achieve their apprenticeship make the transition into full-time employment. Almost no apprentices progress from intermediate to advanced apprenticeships.

Provider details

Unique reference number	58400
Type of provider	Community learning and skills
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	129
Executive Manager	George Knibb
Telephone number	01512 074612
Website	www.nlrco.com

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+
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate	Advanced	Higher					
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	51	18	0	5	0	0		
Number of traineeships	16–19	19+	Total					
	0	0	0					
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	N/A							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	N/A							
Funding received from:	Education and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Mactac							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the project manager, 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 apprentices 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

Paul Cocker, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Elaine Price	Her Majesty's Inspector
Andrew Scanlan	Ofsted Inspector
Kay Hedges	Ofsted Inspector

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