

Intraining

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates

14–17 May 2018

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

Summary of key findings

This is a provider that requires improvement

- Managers do not act quickly enough to tackle the underperformance of subcontractors to ensure that apprentices who are trained by subcontractors get a good-quality experience.
- In 2016/17, most groups of apprentices did not achieve well enough. Achievement for the small number of apprentices aged between 16 and 18 on level 3 apprenticeships and higher level apprenticeships was very low.
- The NCG board does not provide managers with sufficient challenge on the underperformance of apprenticeships.
- Too often, tutors concentrate on low-level tasks that apprentices need to complete rather than setting work that makes them think hard and gain a deeper awareness of what they are learning.
- Tutors and assessors do not cover radicalisation, extremism and careless or improper computer use well enough; consequently, apprentices do not know enough about the potential dangers that they face.
- Many apprentices receive very limited advice and guidance about their next steps and are unaware of what options are available to them at the end of their apprenticeship.

The provider has the following strengths

- Leaders and managers understand the strengths and weaknesses of their apprenticeships. They know their employers well and they are updating their curriculum to meet changing requirements in areas such as computing, finance and human resources.
- Supportive and well-qualified tutors teach an innovative and well-structured curriculum for apprentices on digital programmes and ensure that these apprentices develop the skills that they need to succeed in the information technology sector.
- Apprentices develop positive attitudes and behaviours alongside good vocational and practical skills in areas such as childcare, administration, health and social care and retail.
- The proportion of apprentices who leave their apprenticeships early has fallen because of better recruitment practice and support for apprentices and their employers.
- Through better teaching and support for apprentices at risk of falling behind, the progress that higher level apprentices make has improved significantly.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Intraining is an independent learning provider that delivers apprenticeship training in all regions in England. It is a wholly owned subsidiary company of NCG, a large national education and training group. Since August 2015, Intraining has held its own funding contract to deliver apprenticeships. Almost all of Intraining's learners are apprentices employed by companies ranging from small- and medium-sized enterprises to very large public limited companies and healthcare trusts. Most apprentices work in health, care and public services, or business administration and law. Intraining uses 35 subcontractors to deliver around 60% of its apprenticeships.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- The NCG board should provide robust challenge to managers on areas of underperformance.
- Leaders and managers should improve quality assurance processes by ensuring that:
 - they use accurate and comprehensive data, so that they can evaluate the impact of the changes they are making to the apprenticeship curriculum
 - subcontractors who fail to provide a good service are accountable for their underperformance and improve the quality of their programmes rapidly.
- Leaders and managers should improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and the achievement of apprentices by acting to ensure that:
 - tutors set challenging tasks and targets so that apprentices deepen their knowledge and understanding and gain high-quality skills
 - managers and tutors plan and deliver a relevant curriculum that helps apprentices to understand how radicalisation, extremism and internet usage can affect their lives at work and at home
 - apprentices benefit from helpful careers advice and guidance throughout their programme, which supports them well to achieve their career aspirations.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders and managers articulate their vision for Intraining clearly. Through their comprehensive and accurate evaluation of what they do, they understand the strengths and weaknesses of apprenticeship provision well and present them to employers, staff and to the NCG Corporation and executive board for challenge and scrutiny. As a result of this analysis, leaders and managers have changed the management team entirely and are restructuring the business and curriculum to meet the needs of both small employers and large national employers more effectively. For example, because the level 2 business administration apprenticeship will shortly cease to exist, managers have analysed the type of work that their business administration apprentices do and are using their findings to develop the curriculum to include standards-based apprenticeships in digital applications, finance and human resources.
- Leaders and managers do not ensure that apprentices taught by subcontractors get a good-quality experience. While the number of subcontractors and the scale of subcontracting are much lower than in previous years, managers do not act quickly enough to deal with underperformance. They do not receive sufficiently reliable information about the performance of apprentices in subcontracted provision.
- Managers have implemented fundamental improvements to staff development and training, focusing for example on approaches to off-the-job training. Their clear and well-developed strategies for the curriculum include improved support for tutors and apprentices around equality, diversity and life in modern Britain. The impact of these improvements and strategies is not yet evident in all teaching and learning practice. For example, apprentices are not able to describe clearly enough their understanding of how radicalisation and extremism affect them directly.
- Apprentices coming to the end of the training do not know enough about what they can do to develop their careers further. Managers understand the need to ensure that apprentices can access reliable and independent advice and guidance about career opportunities, but they have not done enough to ensure that apprentices receive this. They have changed recruitment practices to ensure that new apprentices get comprehensive information and support when they begin their apprenticeships.
- Relationships with employers are strong. Employers give clear and helpful feedback to managers so that Intraining staff can tailor programmes to meet their needs. This is particularly evident in standards-based apprenticeships.
- Managers and subcontractors carry out observations of teaching, training and assessment. They use the outcomes of these observations well to support and challenge tutors to do better through effective performance management.
- Managers ensure that apprentices are able to take and pass the English and mathematics qualifications that they need. However, they do not challenge apprentices enough to improve their English and mathematical skills beyond those required for the apprenticeship.

The governance of the provider

- Governors focus well on Intraining's core business and the values and purpose set by the NCG Corporation and executive board. Governors receive regular and effective reports from Intraining's managing director. The NCG executive board ensures that the curriculum continues to evolve to meet the needs of learners and employers, and regional and local priorities, well. The chair of the executive board is fully aware of the strengths and areas for development outlined by Intraining's leaders and managers.
- The NCG executive board has focused too much on the financial performance of Intraining. Leaders and managers in Intraining do not receive sufficient challenge from the board about the impact of underperformance on apprentices and their progress.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and managers ensure that they carry out the necessary checks to vet staff. They update their processes each year and meet statutory requirements.
- Leaders and managers ensure that all staff, including those at their subcontractors, receive appropriate training on safeguarding. Subcontractors have clear guidelines about their duties to safeguard their apprentices and meet the expectations set by leaders. Managers conduct frequent compliance checks.
- There is an effective 'Prevent' duty action plan and close links with external organisations that help leaders and managers to ensure that their apprentices are safe. All apprentices receive comprehensive training during their induction, but few apprentices can recall their learning from their training, particularly that regarding the dangers of extremism.
- Managers follow up and resolve safeguarding concerns effectively. Staff and apprentices understand the processes and procedures to report concerns well.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Too often, tutors concentrate on the work tasks that apprentices need to complete rather than setting challenging work that makes them think hard, gain a deeper awareness of what they are learning, and make rapid progress. This happens because tutors set targets for apprentices that are solely about completing units of qualifications and not about developing their skills and knowledge rapidly. Apprentices cannot explain clearly what they have learned or describe the skills that they still need to develop.
- Most tutors do not use the information that they collect about the knowledge, skills and experience that apprentices have when they begin their programmes. Consequently, they do not plan their teaching and training well enough to meet the individual needs of apprentices. For the small proportion of those apprentices with many years' experience in their industry, this means that they do not improve their knowledge and skills as much as they should.
- The quality of feedback that tutors give to apprentices about their work is too variable in quality and, too often, feedback is not helpful enough. This means that apprentices are often not aware of what they need to do to improve their work or are unable to explain

what they know and can do. A few assessors provide very useful feedback that prompts apprentices to improve their work, respond more fully to the question or assignment, and show that they understand the topic in more depth.

- Tutors are well qualified and experienced in their sectors. Employers value their experience and support. They provide opportunities for tutors to update their experience for three days each year and so improve the training that they give to their apprentices. For example, health and social care tutors shadow domiciliary care workers and work with updated policies and procedures such as those for safeguarding vulnerable adults, while childcare tutors lead story-time activities with young children and help to supervise playtime with nursery staff.
- Tutors access a wide range of staff development activities that help them to improve the support that they give to apprentices. For example, staff have recently completed English and mathematics qualifications alongside qualifications in English for speakers of other languages. This has helped them to tailor their teaching more effectively because they understand better the problems that many of their apprentices face when preparing for and taking examinations.
- Most apprentices receive useful on-the-job training from their employers. Employers report that, as a result of this training, their apprentices become useful and productive employees as they gain confidence and skills. Apprentices trained directly by Intraining tutors, and those in the majority of subcontractors, receive sufficient and regular off-the-job training that meets the requirements of an apprenticeship.
- A small minority of apprentices receive high-quality training. For example, apprentices on digital programmes benefit from a well-structured and innovative curriculum that enables them to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours that they need to succeed in social media, network engineering and technical support. Their tutors support and challenge them to do their best in their virtual classrooms. As a result, attendance is high and apprentices complete their assessed units well.
- Apprentices gain much from effective individual coaching during meetings with their tutors. For a minority of apprentices, infrequent visits caused by cancellations or absences of staff or apprentices lead to slower progress and poor skill development.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

- When tutors or apprentices cancel assessment visits, tutors and managers do not follow the processes laid down to ensure that apprentices get a follow-up visit in good time. This slows the progress of too many apprentices.
- Many apprentices receive very limited advice or guidance about their next steps and often it is too late in their programme to be helpful. As a result, apprentices are unaware of what options are available to them at the end of their apprenticeship.
- The large majority of apprentices do not develop their English and mathematical skills beyond the requirements of their apprenticeship as their assessors do not plan learning to support this. A few apprentices follow functional skills courses at a higher level than they need for their qualification.
- Many apprentices develop appropriate vocational and practical skills as a result of the help that they receive from their employers and tutors. The large majority of apprentices arrive

at work on time and treat their colleagues with respect. They develop the right attitudes and necessary behaviours to be successful in their workplace.

- Attendance at off-the-job training sessions is good. Apprentices present themselves as keen to learn. Apprentices on digital programmes have excellent attendance at their online training sessions because their tutors find alternative times for them to attend when they are unavoidably absent from a timetabled session due to work commitments.
- Applicants are well supported by staff to help them to secure an apprenticeship suitable for their skills and ambitions. They learn about the programme that they have applied for and explore the opportunities that their training will give them. This support has reduced the number of apprentices who leave their apprenticeship early.
- Those apprentices that succeed are proud of their achievements. They are self-assured. For many, the apprenticeship is their first advanced study since they left school, and they celebrate their new-found ability to study and gain qualifications. Many progress, or are keen to progress, further, and begin working at higher levels, including higher education or managerial positions within their employment.
- Apprentices gain useful digital skills, such as use of complex functions in spreadsheets through the support that tutors and employers provide. Apprentices in childcare, health and social care settings, and in some business environments, complete additional training in the workplace to complement their skills. This includes training in first aid and safeguarding.
- Most apprentices who are existing employees learn up-to-date methods of working and learn how to correct long-term bad habits. Many have worked for some years before starting their apprenticeship. Their experience has ensured that they are aware of how to remain safe. They follow appropriate procedures at work should they come across bullying and harassment.

Outcomes for learners

Requires improvement

- At the time of inspection, around 40% of apprentices were working in health and social care, 35% in business, administration and law, 16% in the engineering and manufacturing sectors, and 8% in retail. A small but growing proportion work in the digital and information technology sector.
- In 2016/17, most groups of apprentices did not achieve well. The achievement rate for higher level apprenticeships was very low. The small number of apprentices aged between 16 and 18 on level 3 apprenticeships achieved poorly. Apprentices over the age of 24 working at level 2 achieved at a higher rate than other age groups. The small number of apprentices with a declared learning difficulty or disability did not achieve as well as their peers in 2016/17.
- White British apprentices, who comprised the large majority, did not achieve well in 2016/17. Apprentices who had identified themselves as of Indian heritage achieved at the same low rate. Apprentices with African, Caribbean, Bangladeshi and Pakistani heritage achieved well above the national rate.
- Almost a third of apprentices have not completed their apprenticeships on time during the current year. Leaders and managers have put strategies in place to reduce the number of apprentices who complete their work late, and this proportion is reducing each month as

management changes take effect. Late completion is also reducing because apprentices coming to the end of their standards-based apprenticeships are taking and passing their delayed end-point assessments.

- The proportion of apprentices who have completed their apprenticeships is higher when compared with the same point last year, and almost four out of five apprentices now stay on their programmes and go on to complete. The progress of higher level apprentices has improved significantly. The number of apprentices who leave their apprenticeships in the first six weeks has fallen dramatically because recruitment practice is better at placing apprentices on the right programme.
- As a consequence of their training and the support that they get from their employers and tutors, apprentices are able to show how working as an apprentice has given them new skills and helped them to improve their working practices. For example, medical receptionists described how their customer service apprenticeships helped them to give better advice and support to patients. Factory workers, some of whom had been working for more than 15 years, were able to show how their training had increased their efficiency and satisfaction at work.
- Apprentices improve their career prospects because of their apprenticeships. For example, apprentices in digital and social media gained rapid promotion before they had completed their apprenticeships. Customer service apprentices in a veterinary practice benefited greatly from effective teaching that helped them all to apply successfully for courses in veterinary nursing.

Provider details

Unique reference number	58615
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	6,500
Managing Director	Ian Webber
Telephone number	0191 200 4000
Website	www.intraining.co.uk

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	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	384	2,587	223	1,793	3	285		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	-							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	-							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Geason Parenta Training Ltd Rhino Training Ltd Alpha Care Agency Ltd TRS Training Ltd Global Skills Training Ltd Qualitrain Ltd Nextstep Training Ltd Citrus Training Solutions Ltd Focusing First on People Ltd							

Prospect Training (Yorkshire) Ltd
Nova Payroll Management Ltd
The Construction Skills People Ltd
Derwentside College
NC Training Ltd, Go4it UK Ltd
Lifelong Opportunities Ltd
Encompass Consultancy
Richmond Training Academy Ltd

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the director of learning and performance, 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

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Gerard McGrath	Her Majesty's Inspector
Shahram Safavi	Her Majesty's Inspector
Maggie Fobister	Ofsted Inspector
Phil Romain	Ofsted Inspector

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