

# Inspection of The Derbyshire Network

Inspection dates: 12–14 November 2019

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Adult learning programmes	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	<b>Good</b>

## Information about this provider

At its last inspection in November 2015, The Derbyshire Network (TDN) was a membership organisation of 60 independent learning providers that subcontracted apprenticeship training and adult learning programmes to 17 subcontractors. Following a significant restructuring of its core mission and purpose and a move to new premises in Brimington, Chesterfield, it is now a small, not-for-profit provider delivering adult learning programmes to 44 learners. Around 25 learners are on courses in education and training and around 15 in health and social care. Leaders also offer courses in business administration and preparation for life and work, though only a very small number have enrolled on these courses. Most learners follow courses at level 2 or level 3, and two are studying at level 5. Around two thirds of learners are job seekers in receipt of universal credit and six are employed and in receipt of an advanced learner loan.

## **What is it like to be a learner with this provider?**

Learners are highly motivated and keen to learn new skills and behaviours likely to improve their prospects of employability. They enjoy learning, as demonstrated in their enthusiastic participation in, and regular attendance at, learning sessions.

Learners arrive at sessions prepared and ready to learn. They receive effective pastoral support from caring staff who understand their needs well. As a result, learners develop significantly in confidence and build their self-esteem.

Learners develop new knowledge and skills that help prepare them well for employment. For example, well-qualified and experienced tutors in health and social care equip learners with the skills and behaviours essential to work as support staff in the care of older people and vulnerable adults.

Learners benefit from a curriculum designed by TDN's leaders in consultation with partner organisations, such as Jobcentre Plus. For example, the education and training course was introduced to address a shortage of teaching assistants and support workers in local schools. Many learners who complete this course have gone on to work in education support roles in their local school.

Learners feel safe. Managers and staff provide a safe working environment that learners value. Learners are respectful of each other and staff.

## **What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?**

Tutors are well qualified and have good vocational knowledge and experience. They use their knowledge well to deliver a logical and coherent curriculum that links theory very well to practical application. This helps learners to prepare for their next steps.

Tutors use a good range of activities to check that learners fully understand new knowledge before moving on to the next topic. They use written questions, professional discussions, sharing of ideas and short activities and tasks to check that learners comprehend and can remember knowledge and ideas before moving on to new concepts.

Tutors plan programmes to develop the skills that learners need. For example, one tutor used personality type and learning style assessments to develop learners' understanding of the development needs of children and young people. Another tutor made good use of their experience in health and care to help learners identify the different types of advocates that are available to support individuals with learning disabilities.

Learners with special educational needs receive good support to help them progress and achieve as well as their peers.

Information, advice and guidance are effective. Staff work closely with learners to help them plan their next steps, such as making job applications, preparing for interviews and finding work experience. The large majority of learners progress to higher level training, or voluntary or paid work in schools, or into employment in the health and care sector.

Staff feel proud to be working at the provider. They are led well and are highly motivated to do their best for learners. Leaders are considerate of staff workload and well-being.

Leaders have a clear vision for the provision of a curriculum that matches the local employment context well. The curriculum focuses on developing the knowledge and skills, as well as the confidence and work-readiness, of those who are currently unemployed.

Governors are suitably experienced and have a thorough understanding of the provider's current position. Recently, they have focused on the provider's financial viability and ensuring that provision for adults can continue.

Leaders engage well with local services to ensure that provision better meets learner needs. For example, work with the local jobcentre has improved course design for those in receipt of universal credit and ensured a continued focus on programmes that will support learners into work.

Where tutors provide written feedback, it is often insufficiently precise and fails to routinely correct spelling and grammatical errors. Learners are occasionally left unclear as to what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. Consequently, a few learners do not learn quickly enough and continue making the same mistakes.

Continuing professional development activities support the development of tutors' vocational and subject knowledge. However, these activities do not always focus closely enough on the development of skills beyond the vocational context. For example, tutors have not received any training to help them with the development of learners' English or mathematical skills as part of their course.

Leaders are developing a process to better track the destinations of learners to help them better understand the impact of the curriculum on improving learners' life chances. However, this initiative is still in the early stages of development and it is not yet possible to judge its impact.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders check staff suitability to work with learners before they are employed. They ensure that staff are appropriately trained and understand their responsibilities. They deal promptly with any instances of reported harassment or discrimination.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding topics for learners are suitably matched to the local context, as well as to national themes such as modern slavery and far-right extremism.

However, opportunities for learners to engage in meaningful discussions and debates to further develop their understanding of British values and the dangers of radicalisation are generally limited. As a result, most learners' understanding of the 'Prevent' duty and British values is rudimentary.

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

- Where tutors provide written feedback on learners' work, they should routinely correct spelling and grammatical errors and ensure that they clearly identify what learners have done well and what they need to do to improve.
- Tutors should help to improve learners' understanding of British values and the dangers of radicalisation, for example by providing opportunities for learners to participate in meaningful discussions on these topics.
- Leaders should ensure that tutors participate in professional development activities that promote their wider skills in teaching and learning, such as how to support learners' development of mathematical and English skills.
- Leaders should ensure that they have accurate data on learners' destinations so that they can make better informed decisions about the relevance and impact of the curriculum on learners' participation in work and training.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	58159
<b>Address</b>	Devonshire House Station Road Brimington Chesterfield S43 1JU
<b>Contact number</b>	01773 740437
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.thederbyshirenetwork.org">www.thederbyshirenetwork.org</a>
<b>CEO</b>	Michelle Hill
<b>Provider type</b>	Not-for-profit organisation
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	10–13 November 2015
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	None

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the chief executive officer, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements including observing learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

## Inspection team

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