

# Short inspection of North Lancs. Training Group Limited

Inspection dates:

26–27 November 2019

## **Outcome**

North Lancs. Training Group Limited (NLTG) continues to be a good provider.

## **Information about this provider**

NLTG is a group training association with its headquarters in Accrington, Lancashire. It was founded in 1969 as part of the Furniture and Timber Industry Training Board. NLTG is owned by 32-member companies with eight associate-member companies, located predominantly in north-west England and Northern Ireland. It offers education programmes for young people, apprenticeships and traineeships. NLTG subcontracts a small proportion of its construction training to five further education colleges across the north-west region. It works with Jobcentre Plus and a small number of colleges to provide adult learning programmes to help adults into work. This provision is subcontracted from other providers and out of scope for this inspection.

At the time of the inspection, NLTG had 1,399 apprentices across levels 2, 3, 4 and 5; 259 learners on education programmes for young people from entry level to level 2; and 68 learners on traineeship programmes. It has three training centres in Accrington, Bury and Oldham as well as a specialist furniture manufacturing centre in Accrington.

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

Learners and apprentices are very positive about their learning and training experiences. The vast majority would recommend NLTG to a friend. They find their teachers and tutors helpful and knowledgeable. Apprentices said that they benefit considerably from tutors' regular visits to their workplace. Apprentices recognise particularly how the new knowledge and skills they develop improve their effectiveness at work. Most young people with previously poor experiences of education flourish. They develop high expectations of themselves and become increasingly proud of their progress and achievements. Staff work with a range of partners to develop projects for learners that increase their confidence and prepare them for work. For example, learners repair donated broken bicycles and give them to people in the community. Staff provide exceptional pastoral support, particularly to the most vulnerable learners. Learners and apprentices feel safe. They tell us

that they know what to do and who to speak to if they have a concern.

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

Leaders and staff have established a clear and shared understanding of the purpose of their curriculum. They focus relentlessly on social justice and inclusion for all. Their expectations of what all learners and apprentices can achieve in their futures are high.

Leaders and managers review and develop the curriculum wisely. Leaders base their curriculum development on local and regional skills needs and the strengths of the organisation. They consult widely with employers and work closely with their extensive and well-developed employer networks. For example, they worked collaboratively with the Chartered Insurance Institute to develop a level 2 standards-based apprenticeship for the insurance sector.

Most teachers and tutors carefully plan what learners and apprentices need to know and the skills they need to develop over time. They deliver learning and training in a logical order. For example, learners on education programmes for young people focus on developing their confidence and teamworking skills before learning the skills they need to apply for jobs. Teachers make good links to employers' expectations to prepare learners for future careers. For example, learners discuss the potential impact that drinking alcohol the night before work could have on their driving and workplace performance. Tutors plan training meticulously with employers so that it meets their business needs and expectations. For example, apprentices training on furniture manufacturing programmes to become polishers develop colour matching skills competently before they move onto decorative finishes. Machining apprentices attend block-release courses to build up their knowledge quickly on how to operate specific machinery. However, a small minority of furniture manufacturing apprentices do not link working across the range of production line activities with helping them to understand the full production process. Where learners who are working at different levels are taught together in one group, a few teachers do not challenge those working towards higher-level qualifications sufficiently. Consequently, a few learners do not achieve the standards required. In a small minority of apprenticeship review meetings, tutors do not routinely identify key priorities for development that were discussed, such as punctuality.

Teachers and tutors are experts in their subjects. They hold appropriate teaching qualifications. Tutors use their industry knowledge effectively to promote learning. Teachers and tutors take part in regular staff development activities that improve their teaching practices. For example, teachers and trainers complete English and mathematics qualifications to ensure that they can help learners and apprentices to apply these skills correctly.

Apprentices have regular opportunities to take part in additional learning that broadens their knowledge and skills further. For example, in hospitality they gain

their personal licence qualifications. In business administration, apprentices benefit from product awareness or security training, and visits to trade shows. Most learners and apprentices tell us that their course prepares them well for what they want to do next.

Learners on work placements develop occupational skills as well as confidence and the skills they need for work. They are often able to work in a variety of different departments within their work placements. As a result, they identify the areas of work they enjoy doing the most. For example, they develop the aptitude and skills needed for working in warehousing or in childcare. They often progress to apprenticeships in these areas.

Leaders and teachers ensure that learners and apprentices with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive the specialist support they need to be successful. For example, in furniture manufacturing apprentices receive additional help from learning support workers who provide appropriate activities to develop their sewing and upholstery skills to help them achieve.

Careers information advice and guidance (CIAG) are of a good quality. CIAG staff are well qualified. They use well-thought-out and effective processes for the engagement and recruitment of learners and apprentices. Staff who teach on education programmes for young people have good relationships with local agencies, including faith organisations, the youth offending team and local care homes to help young people re-engage in learning. Tutors work closely with employers and prospective apprentices to ensure that the apprenticeship is the right programme for their needs and future careers. Work placement officers work closely with local colleges to help secure the next phase of a young person's learning if NLTG does not offer apprenticeships in a specific subject area, such as in childcare or hairdressing. In business administration, tutors explore future career opportunities for apprentices in their current job roles through job enrichment, job enlargement and promotion. However, a few tutors do not routinely expand apprentices' awareness of careers beyond their current employer.

Almost all staff tell us that NLTG is well led and managed. Leaders and managers are considerate of staff's workload and well-being. For example, leaders successfully managed a significant and difficult restructure. They kept staff fully informed about the rationale for the changes, which staff understood. Throughout the restructure, staff morale remained high. Leaders review the quality of the provision continually and put actions in place when improvements are needed. For example, the hospitality curriculum declined when apprenticeships changed from frameworks to standards-based apprenticeships. Leaders took swift action to develop new and appropriate programmes for the sector. They communicated the changes effectively to employers.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have comprehensive safeguarding arrangements. Staff record, monitor and follow up safeguarding referrals and disclosures very effectively. The information they provide to learners, apprentices and employers, including subcontractors, helps to keep learners and apprentices safe. Staff provide a broad range of highly effective pastoral support to learners and apprentices. They work closely with external agencies. Leaders provide a 24/7 helpline for learners and apprentices in crisis. As a result of this support, many learners and apprentices who, for personal reasons, find learning difficult, complete their programmes and progress to suitable next steps in their lives and/or careers.

The 'learner hub' contains a wealth of high-quality information and points of reference relating to safeguarding. It provides written materials and videos on wider issues such as drug and alcohol abuse, sexual health, mental health, county lines, the 'Prevent' duty and online safety. Through the hub, learners and apprentices can access further support from external agencies such as The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. A few apprentices could not confidently explain what they understand by the terms or the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.

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

- Ensure that teachers provide sufficiently challenging lessons and activities for learners who are working at different levels within the same group.
- Ensure that apprentices who work for large furniture manufacturers understand the purpose of their working on different aspects of the production line.
- Ensure that, during apprenticeship review meetings, tutors capture all key development areas that apprentices need to work on.
- Ensure that learners and apprentices regularly refresh their knowledge and understanding of the 'Prevent' duty.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	53588
<b>Address</b>	Bradshawgate House 1 Oak Street Accrington Lancashire BB5 1EQ
<b>Contact number</b>	01254 397119
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.nltg.co.uk">http://www.nltg.co.uk</a>
<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Gareth Lindsay
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	10–13 November 2015
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	Blackpool and Fylde College Nelson and Colne College Oldham College Preston's College Wigan and Leigh College

## Information about this inspection

The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since North Lancs. Training Group Limited was judged to be good in November 2015.

The inspection team was assisted by the health and safety/quality manager, 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 visiting 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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