

# Short inspection of Brighton & Hove City Council

Inspection dates:

12–13 February 2020

## **Outcome**

Brighton & Hove City Council continues to be a good provider.

## **Information about this provider**

Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC) subcontracts all its adult and community learning to two subcontractors and two partner providers. Courses range from entry level to level 2.

An established subcontractor, Friends Centre, delivers accredited and non-accredited courses in English, mathematics, English for speakers of other languages, information and communication technology, family learning and a wide range of personal and community learning courses such as arts and crafts, fashion, textiles, photography and languages. BHCC has recently commissioned Tempus Training to provide accredited employability, warehousing and construction courses to fill skills gaps in these sectors.

At the time of the inspection, there were 116 learners on accredited courses and 350 learners on non-accredited courses. There were 49 learners engaged in community development learning: 39 with the Hangleton & Knoll Project and 10 with Whitehawk Inn.

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

Learners benefit from an ambitious curriculum that helps them overcome barriers in their lives, such as low income, unemployment and mental illness. Learners from many different backgrounds experience the same challenging courses in a wide range of subjects in a highly inclusive environment.

Learners are enthusiastic and motivated by what they learn. Learners in practical classes, such as sewing and dressmaking, work on projects at home and bring them back to sessions for further guidance from tutors. Learners in mathematics classes apply what they have learned in class to help with their children's homework.

Learners receive effective information, careers advice and guidance from staff and tutors before the start and towards the end of their courses. As a result, many move on from non-accredited courses to take qualifications at levels 1 and 2.

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

Tutors are confident and well equipped to meet the needs of all learners in their sessions. They help learners with social and mental health problems to make progress and increase their chances of employment. For example, learners with long-term health conditions find the short courses provide them with a perfect way to re-engage in purposeful activity. Parents develop a new interest that they can fit around their busy family lives.

Tutors have a good understanding of the individual starting points of their learners. They adapt their teaching to ensure that those with more advanced starting points benefit from additional and more complex activities. At the same time, they make sure that all the learners in the class participate. For example, in creative writing, all learners complete two and a half minutes of free-flow writing exercises.

Tutors plan and teach their subjects in a sequence that begins with the fundamental building blocks of the subject. Learners then apply their newly acquired knowledge through exercises and practical projects. In a machine sewing class for beginners, for example, learners first learn how to use a sewing machine and how to fix it if it goes wrong. They then learn about tracing and cutting out patterns before moving on to mastering specific techniques, such as attaching zips.

On accredited courses, tutors give precise and helpful verbal feedback that enables learners to quickly understand the mistakes they have made and provide corrections. In English and mathematics classes, tutors assess learners' work quickly and provide instant improvement points to encourage learners to identify and correct errors. In fashion and dressmaking at level 2, tutors give guidance on what learners need to do to achieve the best marks. As a result, learners strive to complete courses to the highest standards.

On non-accredited courses, tutors' feedback on learners' individual learning plans serves little purpose beyond providing praise and encouragement. There are too few examples where learners are told how to improve their work where this would help them produce work to higher standards.

A high proportion of learners achieve their accredited courses and personal learning goals. Tutors assess learners' progress against their course learning aims effectively. The new extended class profile and robust attendance management have resulted in more learners completing their courses. Consequently, overall achievement in accredited courses has increased for a third year running.

BHCC managers maintain effective oversight of the quality and performance of the provision delivered by subcontractors through termly contract review meetings. Managers use these meetings to identify when performance declines and agree changes to bring about improvements. For example, when too many learners were leaving functional skills courses early, managers agreed to move towards shorter,

single-unit courses. As a result, most learners who started English and mathematics courses in the current academic year have completed them.

The recently formed governance board is not yet operating effectively. As a result, the support and challenge that leaders and managers need to improve the provision further is weak.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers ensure that safeguarding arrangements of subcontractors and partners are fit for purpose.

Learners feel safe and are confident that if they had a personal problem or safeguarding concern they could discuss it with their tutor, who would take appropriate action.

Tutors benefit from expert training from BHCC on aspects of radicalisation and extremism affecting the area, for example right-wing extremism. However, they lack the confidence to discuss these in classes so that learners are aware of the risks they face locally.

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

- Tutors should provide feedback to learners on non-accredited courses on how to improve their work so that they can strive to produce work to even higher standards.
- Members of the governance board need to support leaders and managers more effectively and hold them to account to further improve learners' experience and achievements.
- Leaders and managers should support tutors to be more confident in the way they discuss the risks of radicalisation and extremism in classes so that learners become more aware of the relevance of these risks in their daily lives.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	50835
<b>Address</b>	First Floor Hove Town Hall Norton Road Hove East Sussex BN3 4AH
<b>Contact number</b>	01273 290735
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/children-and-education/adult-education">www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/children-and-education/adult-education</a>
<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Carla Butler
<b>Provider type</b>	Local authority
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13–14 January 2016
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	Friends Centre Tempus Training  Partner providers: Hangleton & Knoll Project Whitehawk Inn / Brighton Housing Trust

## Information about this inspection

The inspection was the second short inspection carried out since Brighton & Hove City Council was judged to be good in February 2010.

The inspection team was assisted by the Education and Skills 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

Montserrat Perez-Parent, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Martin Hughes	Ofsted Inspector
Charles Searle	Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
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