

Inspection of Cornwall Marine Network Limited

Inspection dates: 26–28 October 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Good
Apprenticeships	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

Cornwall Marine Network (CMN) was established in 2002 by local marine employers as a non-profit making company designed to help develop marine businesses in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. CMN began training apprentices for levy- and non-levy-paying employers in August 2018. Apprentices are employed in companies in Cornwall on programmes from level 2 to level 4, the majority on level 3. Around two thirds of apprentices are 18 years of age and over, and approximately a third are either 16 or 17 years of age.

Apprentices work primarily in engineering, business and business administration. At the time of the inspection, 60 apprentices were enrolled with CMN. These included 17 studying on a level 3 business administration programme, 13 studying engineering apprenticeships at levels 2 or 3 and nine studying the team leader or supervisor apprenticeships at level 3. A small number of apprentices were following programmes either related to marketing, floor laying or warehousing.

CMN subcontracts the teaching for six accountancy apprentices to Accountancy Learning Limited.

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

Apprentices are enthusiastic about their training and their roles at work. They have a positive attitude to their learning. They become more independent learners in the course of their programmes and are ambitious about their next steps. Apprentices feel they are treated fairly and respectfully. In turn, they demonstrate high levels of respect for their peers and trainer assessors.

Apprentices are articulate and polite. They develop very good communication skills to support their role at work. For example, business administration apprentices become more effective in communicating with clients and colleagues. Engineering apprentices are able to describe clearly to customers how a closed-circuit television installation works, and they can explain how to use it.

Apprentices feel safe. They adhere to required health and safety practices at work. This is particularly important for those working in potentially hazardous locations, such as boatyards. Engineering apprentices are quick to learn how to use and move equipment safely in preparation for boatyard tasks. They are given responsibility to complete a full risk assessment, including identifying hazards and applying effective control measures.

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

Leaders have an excellent working relationship with marine industry employers in Cornwall and have established a very good understanding of their training needs. Leaders have used this knowledge to develop a clear strategy for the curriculums they offer to help improve the economic prosperity of marine businesses in the county. Leaders work closely with employers to ensure that the training is ambitious. They provide apprentices with high-quality training that meets employers' needs. All apprentices benefit from a tailored curriculum matched to their job role.

Leaders have implemented an electronic portfolio system rapidly. This has improved staff's ability to monitor apprentices' progress and provide timely information to managers. Leaders have increased the number of trainer assessors in recent months, which has expanded the level of expertise available to promote apprentices' learning. Leaders have ensured all staff undertake training in the provision of unbiased information, guidance and support to apprentices.

Trainer assessors use their industry experience and subject knowledge effectively when planning training. Apprentices develop their knowledge through well-designed and useful one-to-one teaching. This helps them understand and remember key information and how to apply it at work. Trainer assessors teach the content of courses logically and ensure that key concepts are covered early in the course. For example, engineering apprentices quickly develop a good understanding of safe working practices which enables them to work safely and apply this knowledge throughout their programme.

Apprentices are developing new knowledge, skills and behaviours as a result of their apprenticeship and are producing high-quality work. Employers value the contributions that apprentices are making to their business, providing opportunities for promotion. For example, apprentices are developing skills in business analysis which enable them to identify the potential strengths and weaknesses in planning for a company business event. As a result, one employer was able to plan and implement an event more effectively.

Trainer assessors' approach to training enables apprentices to do and remember more. For example, engineering apprentices can explain in detail how to use the correct technique to join two cables.

Trainer assessors set apprentices assignments that are tailored to their workplace activities. Trainer assessors assess apprentices' work promptly and provide constructive feedback and guidance on how they can improve. As a result, apprentices recognise how to enhance their work and develop their skills.

Apprentices with additional learning difficulties are identified at the start of their programmes and additional support is provided. For example, apprentices lacking confidence in mathematics are given extra lessons and, as a result, develop a more positive attitude to solving mathematical problems.

Leaders are maintaining appropriate oversight of the small subcontract of accountancy apprentices. The subcontractor is providing high-quality training. Its manager values the support received from CMN staff and the training locations that CMN has provided for them to use.

Leaders use staff's appraisals and three-monthly 'job conversations' effectively to consider the well-being of staff and to identify and meet their training needs. Trainer assessors actively maintain their subject expertise and keep up to date with industry changes and development.

Governance is effective. The board of directors includes board members with considerable experience and knowledge of the marine industry. The board has a good understanding of the apprenticeship provision and its members are kept well informed of any issues as part of their monthly meetings. The board of directors provides a clear strategic steer to the managers of the apprenticeship programme and appropriate challenge when necessary.

Leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of their apprenticeship programmes. They have made significant improvements since the previous monitoring visit. However, the new quality assurance arrangements do not explore the views of apprentices fully and merely depend on comments apprentices raise during reviews.

Leaders' lack of planning for apprentices' personal development means that apprentices do not benefit from an effective programme of learning beyond their vocational subjects. Topics such as the dangers of radicalisation and extremism are taught at the beginning of the programme. However, apprentices' understanding of

these topics is not reinforced to ensure that all apprentices retain the knowledge they need. Despite the training in advice and guidance provided to all staff, most apprentices still have only a basic understanding of the career opportunities available to them once they have completed their training. Leaders recognise these weaknesses. They have recently designed a programme to broaden the curriculums and to reinforce apprentices' understanding of topics related to their personal development. However, this programme has yet to be fully implemented, and it is too early to judge its effectiveness.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, staff and employers ensure that apprentices are safe. Consequently, apprentices feel safe and know who to contact if they have a concern.

Leaders and managers have implemented relevant policies and procedures that staff use effectively to safeguard apprentices. All staff are trained in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. The designated safeguarding and deputy safeguarding leads are experienced and have received appropriate training to carry out their roles.

Leaders complete the necessary checks when appointing new staff.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders should ensure that all apprentices benefit from a well-planned personal development programme that helps them develop valuable knowledge and skills beyond the confines of their vocational programme.
- Leaders should ensure that all apprentices have a good understanding of the career opportunities available to them once they have completed their training.
- Leaders should gather the views of apprentices more widely and in greater depth in order to better inform the quality assurance processes.

Provider details

Unique reference number	57802
Address	Unit 7A & 7B Maritime Business Centre Falmouth Business Park Bickland Water Road Falmouth Cornwall TR11 4SZ
Contact number	07496 248215
Website	http://cornwallmarine.net
Principal/CEO	Paul Wickes
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	Accountancy Learning Limited

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the curriculum lead and deputy centre 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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