

Inspection of Release Potential Ltd

Inspection dates:

22–25 February 2022

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Adult learning programmes

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Information about this provider

Release Potential Limited is an independent learning provider based in Stocksfield in Northumberland. It provides adult learning programmes across the West Midlands and the north-east of England funded by the North of Tyne and West Midlands Combined Authorities. At the time of the inspection, there were 42 learners enrolled on a range of courses aimed at supporting unemployed adults back into employment. Release Potential Limited does not subcontract any of its provision to other providers.

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

Learners benefit from learning in an environment that is positive, inclusive and respectful. Tutors recognise the varied backgrounds of adults aiming to return to work and study and make them feel comfortable to do so. Tutors know their learners well and develop good working relationships with them quickly. As a result, learners have positive attitudes to learning and their self-confidence increases.

Learners develop a strong understanding of British values and how they link to the world of work. They understand the rule of law and democracy and can discuss how these concepts apply to their future careers and in their everyday lives. Learners recognise the need to treat their classmates and work colleagues with respect, and the importance of not being discriminatory during training and in the workplace. They demonstrate respect for their tutors and peers and support each other with tasks during lessons.

Learners are supported well to develop the high level of attendance required to be successful in employment. Tutors make reminder telephone calls to learners who do not arrive promptly to the start of a session. Most tutors set clear ground rules and expectations of the professional attitudes expected of learners. However, in a few online lessons, learners do not benefit from clear reminders of the need to display appropriate behaviours.

Learners feel safe and know who to approach if they have concerns. Tutors support them effectively to manage mental health and well-being issues which might present barriers to gaining employment. Learners have access to high-quality safeguarding resources and most learners recognise the potential risks in their local area.

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

Leaders and managers have effectively implemented their strategy to engage with unemployed adults in the north-east of England and the West Midlands to support them back into employment, further education, or training. They are passionate about transforming the lives of unemployed adults and do so successfully. As a result, high numbers of learners progress to employment. For example, learners have progressed to employment in photography, sound engineering, customer service, warehousing and in a range of roles in the National Health Service.

Leaders and managers engage very effectively with a range of partners and stakeholders, such as the Department for Work and Pensions and employers, who provide up-to-date information about the skills that learners need to develop to gain employment. Staff use this information to design a curriculum that enables learners, many of whom are long-term unemployed, to develop their confidence, self-esteem and skills, such as communication and working with others. Learners also gain useful qualifications in information technology, customer service and marketing.

Leaders and managers employ tutors who are well qualified and have the appropriate expertise to teach learners well. They provide tutors and learning support staff with opportunities to further improve their teaching, training and assessment skills further through well planned training events that are specific to the needs of individual staff. For example, tutors and learning support staff attend sessions on the effective utilisation of support staff and how to engage learners in the classroom. This enables them to improve their practice as a tutor or a learning support worker.

Leaders use specialist external staff well to ensure that they have effective oversight of the quality of most of the provision. Together they complete a range of activities, such as observations of teaching, to review and improve the quality of the programmes that they provide. However, leaders and managers have not ensured that online teaching sessions are of the same very high standard as those taught face to face.

Leaders and managers review the progress of learners frequently and identify accurately learners who are at risk of falling behind. They ensure that these learners attend one-to-one sessions to enable them to catch up quickly.

Tutors and a professional film crew run an innovative two-day event at the start of the employability courses to enthuse learners with a fun and enjoyable experience. Learners work collaboratively using industry-standard equipment to make a magazine television show similar to a popular evening talk show. Tutors coach learners well to interview employers, complete recordings, take still photographs and edit films. Learners develop essential skills for employment as well as learning about the media industry. This raises their aspirations significantly.

Most tutors use a range of assessment strategies effectively to check learners' understanding. For example, they ask targeted questions, use quizzes and mark learners' written work accurately. However, in a few online lessons tutors do not use assessment techniques well enough. As a result, in a few instances they do not recognise that learners have not understood the information provided.

Most tutors support learners well to improve their English skills in lessons and when providing feedback on learners' work. They highlight and correct spelling and grammatical errors in learners' workbooks. However, in a few sessions tutors do not identify errors in learners' work and learners in these sessions do not know what they need to do to improve.

Staff organise a showcase event at the end of each course which enables employers to meet learners as prospective employees. These events make learners aware of a diverse range of employment opportunities open to them and enable employers to match the skills and aptitudes of learners to their job vacancies.

Learners benefit from very useful careers information to support them to progress to the world of work. Tutors provide valuable information in tutorials and work closely with employers who provide advice and support throughout the course. Tutors ensure that learners who are not sure of their next steps benefit from effective and impartial careers information and guidance.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The designated safeguarding lead and her deputy have appropriate training and experience to be effective in their roles. Leaders and managers implement appropriate safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty policies and procedures which identify clearly how to report a concern.

Leaders and managers implement suitable safe recruitment practices to ensure that staff are appropriate to work with vulnerable adults.

Leaders and managers have effective links with regional 'Prevent' duty coordinators. They use information from them effectively to develop most learners' understanding of the risks of extremism and radicalisation in the north-east of England and the West Midlands. However, a few learners cannot recall the information and discussions they have had in tutorials about these topics.

Leaders and managers have invested well to train staff as mental health champions who provide valuable support to learners. They have also implemented effective computer systems to protect learners and staff from access to inappropriate websites.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Ensure that learners attending online sessions benefit from the same very high standard of teaching as those attending face-to-face sessions.
- Ensure that all tutors give clear reminders to learners of the need to display professional behaviours.
- Ensure that all tutors identify errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar in learners' written work in order to improve their English skills.
- Ensure that all learners develop secure knowledge and understanding of the potential risks of extremism and radicalisation.

Provider details

Unique reference number	59126
Address	The Bridges Lead Road Stocksfield NE43 7SF
Contact number	01661 843819
Website	https://release-potential.co.uk
Principal/CEO	Gaye Hutchinson
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	3–6 November 2015
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the director of operations, 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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