

Inspection of Profound Services Limited

Inspection dates: 17 to 20 May 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
------------------------------	-------------

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Education programmes for young people	Good
Adult learning programmes	Outstanding
Apprenticeships	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Information about this provider

Profound Services Limited is an independent learning provider based in Durham. It has been a subsidiary of the Learning Curve Group since 2018. At the time of the inspection, there were 222 learners on adult learning programmes, fewer than five learners aged 16 to 19 on traineeships, and 95 apprentices. Most adult learners are on online courses such as level 2 in understanding children's and young people's mental health, level 2 in understanding mental health in the early years, levels 2 and 3 in counselling, and level 3 in leadership and management. Apprentices are on programmes that include level 2 large goods vehicle, level 2 urban driver, level 3 lead adult care worker, level 3 housing and property management, and level 3 digital marketer. The provider currently works with one subcontractor.

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

Learners and apprentices enjoy learning on programmes that prepare them well for their next steps into further learning or employment. They are attentive and engaged, and they contribute well in both online and in-person lessons.

Learners and apprentices benefit from a calm and orderly learning environment, where they listen carefully and respectfully to their teacher and to each other. They gain confidence, self-belief and resilience to continue learning at a higher level, to secure work or to achieve a promotion with their current employer.

As a result of the training and the strong relationships that leaders have developed with employers, learners and apprentices gain new knowledge and skills and acquire appropriate work-related behaviours that are relevant to local needs. Learners value their training and the support that they receive from staff. Most learners and apprentices produce work of a good standard and are proud of their achievements. Learners in traineeships enjoy their work placements as these are relevant to their aspirations and career goals.

Learners and apprentices feel safe. They know whom to contact should they have a safeguarding concern and can instantly report concerns through a recently introduced safeguarding app. They receive helpful guidance about how to keep safe when online. Most learners understand how British values relate to their life and job roles. They recognise the importance of being respectful towards customers at work. Learners and apprentices learn about the dangers associated with radicalisation and extremism. However, a few cannot remember what they have learned and cannot apply their knowledge to their workplace. A few are not aware of risks in the local area.

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

Leaders and managers have a clear and ambitious strategy to provide a range of inspirational programmes that are responsive to local, regional and national priorities. They work exceptionally well with combined authorities and local enterprise partnerships to identify job opportunities and skills gaps in the areas in which they work. Leaders successfully engage with employers to design innovative courses based on employers' training needs. For example, they have developed an urban driver apprenticeship in response to the challenges currently facing the logistics industry and the national shortage of drivers.

Leaders have created a very positive culture that is aligned with their strategic values. All staff firmly put learners and apprentices at the heart of everything they do.

Leaders and managers have a very good oversight of the quality of their provision. They demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the strengths and the areas that they need to improve, and have meticulous and well-thought-out plans to improve rapidly

the quality of their programmes where needed. They frequently check the quality of teachers' practice and provide effective feedback with sensible, measurable actions that teachers find helpful. This contributes to ensuring that adult learners and young people on traineeships benefit from good-quality training, achieve well and successfully progress to their next steps.

Leaders have rightly recognised that too many apprentices on healthcare programmes do not complete their apprenticeship. They have swiftly put sensible actions in place that are having a positive impact on the experience of apprentices on these programmes.

Governors have a very clear overview of the strengths of the provision and what leaders need to improve. They are experienced and suitably qualified in education and finance, which helps them to challenge leaders and hold them to account in order to improve the quality of education.

Leaders provide traineeships for young people, which they teach locally, in addition to subcontracting traineeship provision to Specialist Trade Courses Limited, which is based in Essex. Learners on traineeships gain confidence, resilience and the attributes that they need to be successful at work, such as being on time. Most progress to apprenticeships or into work. Teachers at Profound Services Limited successfully encourage learners to reflect on what they are learning in the workplace and about how they need to improve. However, the quality of the teaching that trainees receive at the subcontractor is not of the same high quality. Staff at the subcontractor are less effective at encouraging learners to reflect fully on their learning experience in the workplace.

Managers and teachers carefully plan the order in which they teach topics to help learners and apprentices learn and recall their knowledge successfully. They introduce learners and apprentices to the basic concepts of their subject before increasing the level of complexity and challenge. For example, adult learners on the level 2 apprenticeship in understanding children's and young people's mental health start by defining mental health and identifying how poor mental health can impact on resilience and self-esteem. They then move on to studying how to prescribe medication and the external and physical effects that medication can have on clients' health and well-being. Teachers on the large goods vehicle apprenticeship identify apprentices' previous experience, knowledge and skills before constructing a training plan to meet their individual needs. They adapt content based on apprentices' skills needs, such as skills in transporting palletted goods and making multi-drop deliveries.

Managers and tutors skilfully identify the starting points of learners and apprentices. They use this information well to plan specialist, individualised training programmes. Teachers place adult learners on the most appropriate programme to meet their needs. They frequently review learners' progress and provide extra support to ensure that learners will achieve. Teachers use skills scans and frequent review meetings with employers to ensure that apprentices and trainees remain on track.

Adult learners benefit from high-quality, well-designed digital resources and excellent support from teachers, which quickly develops their skills and knowledge. They successfully progress in their jobs, move into employment or participate in higher levels of study on completion of their course.

Leaders have a clear strategy to support learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which ensures that these learners receive the same opportunities to access learning as their peers. Teachers use a range of effective, supportive methods, such as additional one-to-one sessions, additional spoken feedback and workpacks on different coloured paper. They also help learners to video or use dictation to record their answers to assessment tasks. These strategies contribute significantly to enabling learners with SEND to keep up with their studies and to achieve well.

Most teachers use assessment very well to check learners' understanding and to inform future learning. They quickly provide learners and apprentices with comprehensive and individualised feedback. Teachers praise learners for what they have done well and provide further examples to extend learning. Where appropriate, learners are helpfully supported and signposted to develop their writing and presentation skills further. Consequently, the standard of learners' work improves over the time they are on their programme.

A few teachers on the apprenticeship provision do not extend apprentices' knowledge beyond the requirements of the standard. As a result, a few apprentices cannot relate the key concepts that they learn about to their work roles. For example, business administration apprentices can outline legislation related to their sector, but do not understand how this aligns with their specific work roles and responsibilities.

Teachers effectively support learners and apprentices to develop their English skills. They teach new technical language and how to reference, and correct spelling, punctuation and grammar. Apprentices who need to achieve mathematics and English qualifications do so quickly before they approach their end-point assessment.

Learners and apprentices receive a good range of information that helps them to make appropriate, informed career choices. Leaders have employed a careers team and advisers who provide effective and impartial careers guidance that supports learners and apprentices to progress to their next steps. Tutors also routinely give careers advice and guidance to learners and apprentices. As a result of the careers guidance that they receive, learners are enthusiastic and keen to do well and make progress in their chosen careers.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have developed comprehensive safeguarding policies and processes that keep learners safe effectively. The designated safeguarding lead and 'Prevent' duty officer are appropriately qualified and experienced in how to deal with safeguarding concerns. Staff are well trained and kept informed through monthly hot topics about the risks that their learners and apprentices might face. Leaders ensure that the staff whom they appoint are safe to work with learners and apprentices.

Apprentices learn how to keep themselves safe at work. For example, apprentices on the large goods vehicle apprenticeship learn how to use digital tachographs to record working hours and rest breaks. They complete vehicle checks and safely secure loads on their vehicles.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Ensure that all apprentices are supported well to enable them to remain on programme and achieve their apprenticeship.
- Ensure that all teachers on apprenticeship programmes encourage apprentices to relate theoretical concepts to their specific job roles.
- Ensure that the quality of traineeships provided by the subcontractor is of the same high standard as that provided directly.
- Ensure that learners and apprentices develop their understanding of the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism and of local risks, so that they are fully aware of these risks and are able to apply this knowledge to their daily lives.

Provider details

Unique reference number	58464
Address	1 Dunelm Rise Durhamgate Spennymoor Durham DL16 6FS
Contact number	01388 777229
Website	www.learningcurvegroup.co.uk
Principal/CEO	Brenda McLeish
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	6 April 2016
Main subcontractors	Specialist Trade Courses Limited

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 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

Philippa Firth, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Hayley Lomas	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mary Ramsden	Ofsted Inspector
Gareth Luke	Ofsted Inspector
Megan Dauksta	Ofsted Inspector

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022