

# Inspection of North West Training Council

Inspection dates:

10 to 13 January 2023

## Overall effectiveness

## Requires improvement

The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Apprenticeships

**Requires improvement**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

## Information about this provider

North West Training Council (NWTC) operates from Liverpool, Merseyside. It recruits apprentices nationally and from the North West of England, including Cheshire, Merseyside and Greater Manchester. It provides engineering training for around 150 employers which include national and small- to medium-size employers.

Leaders and managers have recently established a new partnership with a local college. Their aim is to broaden the curriculum that they provide to meet the regional and national skills priorities.

NWTC provides apprenticeships in advanced manufacturing technologies and engineering. At the time of the inspection, there were 360 apprentices enrolled on apprenticeships. There were 96 on the level 3 food and drink maintenance engineer, 70 on the level 3 engineering fitter, 69 on the level 3 engineering technician, 66 on the level 3 installation electrician and maintenance electrician, 23 on the level 3 fire emergency and security systems technician, 17 on the level 3 science industry maintenance technician and 10 on the level 3 maintenance and operations engineering technician standards-based apprenticeships. There are a small number of apprentices studying the level 3 engineering framework apprenticeship.

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

Apprentices are professional and have a positive attitude to their learning. They have high aspirations to become qualified engineers and progress to successful careers in the sector. Apprentices' attendance and punctuality are high. They articulate well the importance of attendance and punctuality at the training centre and work.

Apprentices incrementally develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours. Level 3 engineering fitter apprentices improve their skills when using lathes and mills allowing them to effectively use milling machines at work. This results in apprentices being able to complete a broader range of tasks at work.

Staff support apprentices effectively and value their industry knowledge and experience. Apprentices receive one-to-one support from tutors to support them with higher-level mathematics. Apprentices demonstrate positive behaviours and respect for others. They understand the high expectations of behaviour that NWTC and their employers demand. Staff create a calm and welcoming environment for apprentices to learn.

Apprentices improve their confidence as a direct result of their apprenticeship. Level 3 engineering technician apprentices apply engineering theory and practice to independently undertake large-scale engineering repair projects at work. Employers value the positive contributions that apprentices make to their businesses.

Apprentices benefit from exceptional facilities. They have access to high-quality, industry-standard equipment and workshops. This supports them to gain the engineering skills they need at work.

Apprentices do not receive effective, impartial guidance on career opportunities available to them beyond their current employment. This results in apprentices having insufficient information to make well-informed decisions about their long-term career choices.

Apprentices feel safe at the training centre and work. They have a good understanding of health and safety legislation, which they apply to their engineering practice to ensure that they keep themselves and others safe. For example, they wear the appropriate personal protective equipment in workshops and at work.

Apprentices complete training on safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty at the beginning of their apprenticeship. However, staff do not systematically reinforce apprentices' awareness of the risks relating to radicalisation, extremism and fundamental British values throughout the apprenticeship.

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

Leaders and managers have a sound rationale for the curriculum that they offer. The

curriculum clearly links to regional and national priorities to prepare a pipeline of trained engineers to meet the skills shortages and to respond to the ageing workforce in the engineering and manufacturing sector.

The curriculum for most apprentices is logically sequenced so that they incrementally build their knowledge, skills and behaviours over time. Level 3 engineering technician apprentices are able to select materials, undertake basic design and produce parts that are used in the maintenance and fabrication of medical mass spectrometry devices. However, tutors and technical training advisers place too much focus on the content of the mandatory qualifications within the apprenticeship. They do not always develop apprentices' knowledge, skills and behaviours that the apprenticeship standard requires them to learn.

Leaders and managers do not work with all employers to plan an ambitious curriculum for all apprentices. They work effectively with most large employers to develop the curriculum for apprentices. For example, leaders and managers collaborate with a local science laboratory to develop a niche level 3 science industry maintenance technician apprenticeship. However, this is less effective with small- to medium-size employers. Too frequently, these employers have little or no involvement in the curriculum planning for their apprentices.

Leaders and managers ensure that staff are experienced and qualified to teach apprentices. Staff regularly update their industry knowledge and skills, such as studying for industry occupational health and safety qualifications, and training on new industrial equipment. However, staff do not receive ongoing development to improve their teaching skills. For example, despite tutors receiving training on how to complete effective progress reviews and provide feedback that helps apprentices to improve their work, this training has not yet had a positive impact on apprentices' experiences. They still do not have a clear understanding of what they have done well and what they need to improve.

Tutors' use of apprentices' starting points to plan individualised learning is inconsistent. For example, level 3 fire emergency and security systems technician apprentices complete the same content irrespective of their prior experience and knowledge and are not challenged to achieve their potential. Conversely, apprentices studying the level 3 engineering fitter and level 3 food and drink maintenance engineer standard have their apprenticeship content and duration individualised in line with their prior experience and qualifications.

Apprentices develop their mathematical skills well. Level 3 science industry maintenance technician apprentices accurately complete load calculations on cabling installations to correctly identify that a voltage drop can be due to incorrect cable sizing. All apprentices develop and use an extensive range of technical terminology. However, tutors are not ambitious enough for apprentices to improve their English skills. This results in apprentices not improving their writing skills in preparation for further study or employment.

Staff do not introduce apprentices' final assessments early enough in their

apprenticeship. Level 3 food and drink maintenance engineer apprentices are not made aware of the requirements or grade opportunities for their final assessments at the beginning of their apprenticeship. This results in a few apprentices having to complete additional training to meet the needs of the apprenticeship standard. Leaders identify that a small proportion of apprentices were delayed in completing their final assessments due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite this, apprentices that do complete their final assessments achieve, and nearly half of apprentices are awarded merit and distinction grades.

Leaders do not ensure that on- and off-the-job training is effectively coordinated for all apprentices. In some instances, employers do not always know the content of apprentices' off-the-job training and consequently, do not align apprentices learning at work. This results in apprentices being unable to swiftly practise and hone their skills.

Tutors do not provide apprentices with sufficiently challenging targets so that all apprentices achieve their full potential. Targets are based on the completion of tasks for the qualification included in the standard and not on the knowledge, skills and behaviours that apprentices should be developing. Apprentices have no targets to achieve high grades in their final assessments or qualifications.

Leaders' quality assurance processes lack rigour and focus too much on compliance of awarding organisations or funding bodies. They do not use the findings of their quality processes to swiftly identify weaknesses in the quality of education that they provide for apprentices. Leaders have recently introduced a performance review process for staff. However, targets set by leaders for staff are insufficiently ambitious to ensure that they contribute to the continuous improvement of the training that they provide for apprentices.

Governance is ineffective. The information provided to the board is insufficiently detailed to enable board members to have an accurate oversight of the quality of training that apprentices receive. Board members have been too slow to challenge leaders to make swift improvements to the weaknesses identified.

Leaders have very recently formed a new strategic partnership with a local college. This has resulted in changes being made to the board membership. Consequently, there is now more rigour and scrutiny in the meetings that board members hold. However, it is too early to see the impact this has had on the quality of education that apprentices receive.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers place a high priority on the safeguarding of staff and apprentices within the organisation. They have put in place effective policies and procedures to ensure staff know how to keep apprentices safe. All staff, including the designated safeguarding lead and their deputy, complete appropriate training on

safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. The safeguarding team are trained in mental health first aid and suicide awareness. Leaders and managers complete checks during recruitment to ensure that staff are suitable to work with apprentices.

The safeguarding team has established positive links with a range of agencies and organisations to refer apprentices to for support and advice. This ensures that quick and effective actions are taken when concerns are raised.

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

- Leaders and managers should put in place robust and effective quality assurance processes that help leaders to improve the quality of education for apprentices.
- Leaders and managers should provide apprentices with an effective understanding of the requirements of their final assessments and the grades available early in their apprenticeship.
- Leaders and managers should ensure that tutors provide apprentices with effective feedback on their written work so that they know what they have done well and what they need to do to improve.
- Leaders and managers should work with all employers to plan and coordinate apprentices' on- and off-the-job training to ensure that apprentices can swiftly practise and master their knowledge, skills and behaviours at work.
- Leaders and managers should provide apprentices with high-quality, independent careers advice so that apprentices have a clear understanding of all the opportunities that are available to them.
- Leaders and managers should provide board members with high-quality, detailed information so that board members can challenge and hold leaders and managers to account for the quality of training that apprentices receive.

## **Provider details**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	53615
<b>Address</b>	Unit 33 Dunes Way Wellington Employment Park Sandhills Liverpool Merseyside L5 9RJ
<b>Contact number</b>	0151 523 0808
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<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Colette Potts
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 and 2 November 2017
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	None

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of quality, 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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