

# Inspection of The Voluntary and Community Sector Learning and Skills Consortium

Inspection dates:

31 January to 3 February 2023

**Overall effectiveness****Inadequate**

The quality of education

**Inadequate**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Inadequate**

Leadership and management

**Inadequate**

Adult learning programmes

**Inadequate**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

**Information about this provider**

The Voluntary and Community Sector Learning and Skills Consortium trades as Enable from premises in Nottingham. At the time of the inspection, there were 330 learners and apprentices in learning, either at the provider or learning with one of 11 subcontractors. The vast majority of learners are on adult courses in employability, English and mathematics. Vocational courses include health and social care and warehousing and storage. More than 100 learners are on distance-learning level 3 access to higher education courses (HE), studying one of 17 subjects. There are fewer than five apprentices on three different standards and fewer than five learners on traineeship programmes. Almost all learners and apprentices are over the age of 18.

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

Tutors do not accurately identify what learners and apprentices can do at the start of their programmes. They do not use the information they gather from initial assessments to plan an appropriately individualised programme for each learner and apprentice to enable them to make the progress they are capable of.

Leaders, managers and tutors do not always provide learners with identified additional learning needs, such as dyslexia and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, with additional support and guidance. Too often, tutors are not aware of these additional needs and, when they are, they do not know how to support learners. In a very few cases, tutors establish partnerships with relevant agencies to provide specialist support for learners.

Too many learners do not attend their lessons often enough, and those who do are not punctual. Leaders and managers do not monitor the attendance of learners well enough. Attendance is particularly poor for learners following programmes in English for speakers of other languages and the diploma in health and social care. Learners who follow warehouse and storage and functional skills programmes have better attendance at learning sessions.

The vast majority of learners do not benefit from any activities beyond their vocational training that would enable them to consider and explore personal interests and talents.

Learners develop their confidence and become more independent and autonomous. For example, learners developing their English skills say that, because of their training, they are able to visit the doctor without being accompanied. Those on the warehousing and storage course become work ready, which they believe has a positive impact on their personal lives and well-being. Learners are respectful and tolerant of each other and their tutors. Learners studying with the subcontractors say that they feel safe and would be confident to report to their tutor if they had a concern.

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

Leaders, managers and trustees do not have an accurate oversight or understand the quality of the teaching they provide, including that of subcontractors. Their self-assessment report is overly positive. Weaknesses identified at the previous inspection remain, and performance has declined significantly.

The board of trustees does not understand the organisation's strengths and the many areas for improvement well enough. Leaders do not provide the board with accurate information to enable them to provide effective scrutiny and challenge.

Leaders and managers do not work effectively with subcontractors, who receive no guidance or support to develop and improve the quality of the courses they provide, beyond checks of their compliance documentation. Tutors at subcontractors do not receive training to keep their teaching practices current and effective.

Leaders, managers and tutors do not monitor learners' and apprentices' progress or achievement carefully enough. Learners' and apprentices' targets are too generic. For example, all learners on functional skills courses have the same target: to improve their English skills. On other courses, targets focus on the completion of tasks rather than helping learners to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need for their future. Apprentices do not benefit from frequent reviews with their employer and their tutor. They are poorly prepared for their end-point assessments.

Tutors on access to HE courses do not assess learners' work frequently enough. The gap between assignments set for learners is too long, and learners do not use the feedback from one submission to help them improve their work on the next.

Tutors' teaching practice is ineffective, particularly on access to HE courses. Learners are expected to work independently, with no input from the tutor, and to contact their tutors only when they need help and support. Teachers are not readily available due to other teaching commitments. Too many of the teaching resources used are outdated, and tutors do not routinely update them.

Information, advice and guidance about careers are not effective. The guidance that learners and apprentices receive does not, for most, directly link to their planned next steps or to what they are capable of achieving. This reinforces the low expectations that leaders have. A few learners on warehousing and storage courses, taught by the subcontractor, have a discussion at the pre-programme interview and are supported to gain employment because this area has a high demand for trained staff in the local area.

Most tutors form positive relationships with their learners from the start of their course and, as a result, learners become keen to learn. Tutors understand some of the personal challenges that learners face and help them to access local food banks and childcare facilities.

Just over a half of learners on the access to HE course who completed their course the previous year secured a place at a higher education institution. However, a significant number of learners on access to HE programmes have passed their planned end date.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Some tutors on adult access to HE programmes do not know who the designated safeguarding officers are and have not received details of how to refer learners who may present with concerns to the help and support that they need.

Leaders and managers do not provide learners with a planned and taught curriculum about radicalisation and extremism. Learners who are taught via distance learning receive no information about how to stay safe online. Many learners at subcontracted providers have a slightly better understanding of some topics. For example, learners based at a community centre benefit from learning about hate crime from guest speakers.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that all staff are suitable to work with learners and apprentices. For example, they do not conduct appropriate due diligence checks on access tutors, and virtually no information is gathered about freelance tutors who teach on these courses.

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

- Ensure that leaders, managers and trustees take swift action to improve the many weaknesses identified. In particular, rapidly improve the effectiveness of the quality improvement process to identify the strengths and weaknesses in the quality of education and rectify weaknesses swiftly.
- Ensure that learners and apprentices benefit from a well-sequenced, planned and organised curriculum, which enables them to develop and build substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours.
- Ensure that apprentices and their employers understand the requirements of the apprenticeship programme and that tutors and employers work closely together to discuss apprentices' progress and support them well to pass their end-point assessments.
- Improve and monitor learners' attendance and intervene quickly to help learners remain on track.
- Ensure that learners and apprentices benefit from high-quality careers information, advice and guidance to support them to make informed choices about their careers.
- Ensure that learners benefit from feedback on their work that helps them to understand what they need to do to improve.
- Ensure that tutors are provided with support and training to improve their teaching practice, and ensure that resources used are appropriate and current.
- Ensure that information collected about learners and apprentices is used to plan an individualised programme of learning to enable them to make the progress of which they are capable.
- Ensure that learners who tell staff that they have additional learning needs receive the support they need to enable them to make good progress.

- Ensure that all staff understand who the designated safeguarding leaders are and pass this information on to learners, to enable them to report concerns.
- Ensure that all learners and apprentices benefit from a well-planned and taught curriculum about staying safe.
- Ensure that appropriate background checks are made on all staff to check they are suitable to work with learners and apprentices.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	58380
<b>Address</b>	Floors 1-4 3-5 Stoney Street Nottingham NG1 1LG
<b>Contact number</b>	0115 7100200
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.enable.uk.net">www.enable.uk.net</a>
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Ian Newton
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	2 to 5 October 2018
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	Regency Source Trent Education White Rose Beauty Growing Rural Enterprises Tempest Training Abbey Access Training Arrow Care PYCA Belong Riverside Training Spalding Learn UK

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the contracts 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

Hayley Lomas, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
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