

# Inspection of Northern Care Training Limited

Inspection dates:

30 May to 2 June 2023

**Overall effectiveness****Good**

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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Adult learning programmes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Apprenticeships	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

**Information about this provider**

Northern Care Training is a national independent learning provider that provides apprenticeships and adult learning programmes. It became part of the Learning Curve Group in 2018. At the time of the inspection, there were 431 adult learners studying on a wide range of level 2 and level 3 flexible online courses, the largest of which were in counselling skills, introduction to neuroscience in early years and understanding autism. There were 166 apprentices studying on seven standards from level 2 to level 5. The majority of apprentices were studying the level 2 adult care worker standard and the level 3 lead adult care worker standard, with 65 on each programme.

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

Learners and apprentices benefit from a welcoming and respectful atmosphere provided by supportive coaches and tutors. They are clear about what is expected of them and the commitment needed to follow their course. Learners and apprentices are highly motivated and have positive attitudes to learning. They are keen to progress towards their career goals.

Apprentices and learners attend very well. Coaches and tutors place a strong focus on attendance. Learners participate fully in online sessions, and apprentices attend face-to-face sessions well. Coaches ensure that employers understand at the start of the programme the importance of apprentices' attendance at sessions and providing time for apprentices to carry out their studies.

Leaders and managers have created a culture that promotes opportunities for learners and apprentices to develop their interests and skills successfully. Learners and apprentices carry out volunteer roles in addition to their demanding work. Learners volunteer to run activities such as coffee mornings for a cancer charity and translating in community centres. Apprentices receive nomination for awards, such as the residential property management award for rising stars, apprentice of the year for the Northern Lincolnshire and Goole NHS Foundation Trust and national apprenticeship awards.

Learners and apprentices are very well supported by their tutors and coaches. Tutors and customer care services are available to provide support seven days a week for learners and apprentices when they need it. Learners benefit from prompt communication with staff to access tutorial support and masterclasses. Tutors and coaches mark work quickly and accurately. They provide very helpful and clear feedback on how to improve written work that includes reference to additional resources and websites, and indicates strategies to improve practice. Learners and apprentices develop confidence and resilience as a result of the support they receive.

Learners and apprentices feel safe, and they know who to contact if they have any concerns. Tutors and coaches use learners' and apprentices' postcodes to check for risks that are local to the areas in which they live. Staff make good use of a bank of quick response codes that signpost to websites providing advice on issues such as addiction, family and children's rights, and financial issues. This ensures that staff can identify issues and offer appropriate support to learners and apprentices located nationally.

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

Leaders show considerable commitment to meeting the skills needs of the health and social care sector nationally through providing training and education to new and existing staff. They make good use of labour market information to identify national needs. Leaders provide a progression route for apprentices from level 2

through to level 5. They also provide flexible online adult learning courses at level 2 and level 3 that increase the skills and knowledge of the health and care workforce.

Tutors and coaches plan and sequence the curriculum well. Coaches work with employers to ensure that they develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours that employers need their apprentices to have. They include specific training to meet individual employer needs, such as training on substance misuse and mental health. Tutors structure adult learning programmes in a way that enables learners to work at their own pace. They plan the curriculum to give learners definitions and foundations before moving on to more complex topics.

Tutors and coaches are well qualified and highly experienced in their field. Coaches are highly knowledgeable, and they use their experience very well to develop apprentices' understanding. Tutors on the level 3 certificate in principles of special educational needs and disabilities programme are current practitioners working in the social, emotional and mental health field. Tutors on the level 3 access to midwifery programme use their expertise to develop learners' understanding of subject-specific terminology, such as prokaryotic and eukaryotic cells, which learners can then apply when analysing the impact on reproduction.

Leaders, managers and governors rightly recognise that the number of apprentices withdrawing from their programmes early has been too high in recent years. They have implemented effective interventions to stem the decline. Leaders have recruited new staff to oversee the provision who have put in place a risk register to inform monthly meetings with employers. Apprentices complete a probationary period of six months to ensure that they are suitable for the role. Leaders and managers select employers that have a high commitment to staff training. They have appointed staff with responsibility for staff engagement and well-being to improve the retention of coaches and provide consistency for apprentices. Specialist functional skills staff work closely with coaches to improve the achievement of English and mathematics qualifications. As a result of the measures taken, the withdrawal rate of apprentices has slowed significantly, and the proportion of apprentices completing their apprenticeship successfully has increased.

Learners and apprentices produce a high standard of work. Learners demonstrate through their assignments how their knowledge and skills develop. Apprentices improve the quality of their writing in the workplace when completing care plans and risk assessments. Their assignments improve in the depth of research, content and analysis. Apprentices improve their mathematics skills and take on more responsibility in the workplace for finance, managing budgets and analysing data.

In too many cases, meetings with apprentices, line managers and coaches are not used effectively enough to support individual apprentices to make rapid progress. In a very few cases, coaches do not make best use of the time spent with employers and apprentices to review individual progress effectively or address any issues affecting apprentices' progress.

Learners and apprentices receive effective, up-to-date and impartial careers advice.

Coaches ensure that apprentices know what career options are available and what they need to do to take their next steps in education or training. Towards the end of adult learning programmes, tutors talk to learners about training, education and employment opportunities.

Leaders and managers support staff well and are very conscious of their work-life balance. They invest heavily in development of their staff. Leaders provide a very broad range of training opportunities in the 'purple people academy' that include coaching, mentoring and management. Tutors also update their knowledge through a 'hot topics' monthly newsletter that covers issues such as healthy relationships, menopause, the risks of revenge pornography and online risks. Tutors and coaches benefit from effective support and training to improve their subject knowledge and teaching practice.

Board members are suitably qualified and experienced to carry out their roles effectively. They have a clear oversight of the provision, and they understand the significant challenges of delivering education and training in the health and care sector. Leaders and managers provide board members with detailed papers and reports to ensure the board members are aware of risks to the business.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers foster an effective safeguarding culture within the organisation. They carry out thorough checks to ensure that staff are safe to work with vulnerable young people and adults. The process includes a face-to-face induction to ensure that staff new to the organisation understand their safeguarding responsibilities, including how to recognise and report any concerns. New employees are risk assessed and supervised in one-to-one meetings with learners until Disclosure and Barring Service checks are complete.

Leaders and managers have recruited designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) throughout the organisation who are well qualified and experienced to carry out the roles effectively. All staff receive annual safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty training to ensure that they keep up to date with changes to legislation. Leaders and managers have invested in an effective online platform to record and escalate safeguarding concerns throughout the organisation. Staff record all concerns promptly and accurately, and report appropriately to the DSLs, who closely monitor actions taken and, where appropriate, provide suitable support.

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

- Conduct effective progress meetings with apprentices and employers.
- Continue to reduce the number of apprentices who leave the programme early.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	57942
<b>Address</b>	Dunelm Rise Durham Gate Spennymoor Durham DL16 6FS
<b>Contact number</b>	01388 777129
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.learningcurvegroup.co.uk">www.learningcurvegroup.co.uk</a>
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Brenda McLeish OBE DL
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent earning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	21 to 24 March 2017
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	N/A

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the director of excellence, 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

Joanne Stork, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
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