

Inspection of Sheffield City Council

Inspection dates: 23 to 26 May 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Adult learning programmes	Outstanding
Apprenticeships	Good
Provision for learners with high needs	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Information about this provider

Sheffield City Council provides adult learning programmes, apprenticeships and programmes for learners with high needs across Sheffield. Provision for adults is delivered at community venues across the city and is targeted at areas of high deprivation. At the time of the inspection, there were 582 learners on adult learning programmes. Most adult learners were on programmes in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and digital skills. The council provides apprenticeships for council employees and small and medium enterprise (SME) employers across the city. There were 206 apprentices on standards-based programmes in a range of vocational areas from level 2 to level 6. The highest proportion of apprentices were following programmes in level 2 carpentry and joinery, level 3 business administration, level 3 teaching assistant and level 6 social worker. The council provides programmes for learners with high needs at the Sheaf College centre. There were 163 learners with high needs on personalised programmes preparing them for their next steps. The council works with 10 subcontractors, delivering adult and community learning programmes and apprenticeships.

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

Learners and most apprentices demonstrate very positive attitudes to their learning. They are keen to learn and attend even where they face challenges with childcare arrangements and other life commitments. In adult provision, tutors place a high priority on the importance of attendance as part of developing the employability skills and knowledge that learners need to progress to their next steps.

Learners and apprentices benefit from effective careers advice and guidance that helps them to develop the knowledge and skills that they need to achieve their aspirations. Learners with high needs access weekly careers support in group and one-to-one sessions, participate in work experience and benefit from visits to the centre by employers. Apprentices have frequent contact with careers advisers to check on progress towards their next steps, including prior to their end-point assessment. Adult learners benefit from careers staff visiting teaching sessions to provide group and one-to-one support and visits to training providers with staff to look at potential progression routes.

Staff support learners and apprentices to develop a deep understanding of fundamental British values during their studies. Apprentices recognise the importance of treating people equally and fairly, and respecting differences.

Learners and apprentices feel safe. They appreciate the respect that peers and staff show towards them, and recognise that bullying and harassment are not tolerated. Learners and apprentices know how to report concerns should they need to. This includes the behaviour of others, including those in their communities, and when they have concerns about their own personal health, safety and well-being.

Tutors provide effective support to learners on how to stay safe online. On adult digital programmes, tutors teach learners how to report concerns online such as abuse and offensive materials that they or their families come across. In communities where crime is higher, tutors ensure that learners know how to report suspected crime and incidents to the police using online reporting systems. As a result, learners know how to take appropriate actions when online reporting is the only mechanism.

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

Leaders and managers have a clear purpose to provide apprenticeships, adult learning and provision for learners with high needs that enable residents in the city to gain the skills, confidence and abilities to be successful in employment and to become active members of the community. Adult learning currently focuses on supporting the most vulnerable learners, including the high proportion of asylum seekers and refugees, to access training that enables them to become active citizens and to progress towards employment. Apprenticeship provision is based around the skills needs of the council and the needs of local SMEs. The provision for learners with high needs enables those who require a smaller and more nurturing

environment to develop their confidence and vocational skills before moving to their next steps, including to the local college and supported internships.

Leaders and managers have in place effective quality assurance processes. They use a well-developed calendar of quality assurance activities across all provision, including that of subcontractors, to identify strengths and weaknesses in the provision. Activities include themed lesson visits, audits, gathering feedback from learners and employers, and scrutiny of learners' work. Leaders and managers use the information collected effectively to inform training and to make improvements to their programmes. They have made recent improvements in providing feedback to learners, target-setting and using effective strategies to promote reading.

Tutors plan and sequence the curriculum carefully to enable learners and most apprentices to develop their knowledge and skills progressively over time. Digital programmes for adults start at a non-accredited level, teaching learners how to use smartphones and introducing them to settings and features beyond making phone calls. Learners then develop their knowledge of how to use a laptop computer before having the opportunity to progress on to accredited provision at entry level and level 1. Apprentices in level 2 carpentry and joinery start by covering health and safety, before moving on to the principles of construction. Apprentices then develop their skills further, such as enhancing their understanding of the importance of personal protective equipment and working with hazardous substances. Learners with high needs develop communication and presentation skills that help them to create and showcase short films on topics such as mental health.

Staff are professionally qualified and have relevant industrial experience. They benefit from frequent training to keep their teaching skills up to date. Training includes providing feedback to learners, supporting learners with autism spectrum disorder, metacognition and bespoke 'Prevent' duty training. Tutors keep their subject-specific skills up to date by attending webinars and networking events, and working closely with qualification awarding organisations. Training is very collaborative across all elements of the service, and staff frequently share best practice.

Learners and most apprentices benefit from high-quality teaching and training. Tutors use a wide range of engaging learning activities and make effective use of the resources that they have developed. On digital courses for beginners, tutors provide learners with well-designed visual instructions that they use when setting up an email account. On carpentry and joinery apprenticeships, tutors demonstrate how to dismantle a sash window using a full-sized model accompanied by detailed drawings of the internal parts. Supported internship programme tutors use a range of strategies such as educational music and colour-coded instructions to help learners prepare for interviews.

Learners with high needs follow highly effective personalised programmes. They receive helpful support that enables them to progress to supported internships, employment or further study. Staff make effective use of education, health and care (EHC) plans. These are accurate, reflect the individual learner and are frequently

reviewed in line with statutory guidance. Learners receive the correct level of personal and medical care as outlined in their EHC plan. They access a range of support services and benefits from onsite therapists who provide support for individual needs around mental health and well-being. Learners with high needs develop detailed knowledge across the curriculum and, as a result, make sustained progress from their identified started points.

Tutors check learners' and apprentices' understanding well to assess progress. They use questioning techniques skilfully to probe and test what learners and apprentices know. They ensure that learners and apprentices have grasped key concepts before moving on. For example, tutors on programmes preparing learners for the rail industry complete daily assessments to check learners' understanding of the content covered that day. Learners with high needs who have speech and hearing difficulties often receive helpful feedback through British Sign Language. However, tutors on the level 3 business administration apprenticeship do not involve employers sufficiently to review apprentices' progress and plan learning to address skills gaps.

Tutors support learners and apprentices well to develop their English and mathematics skills. Where learners are not studying towards qualifications in English and mathematics, tutors integrate skills development into the curriculum. For example, in provision for learners with high needs, learners continue to develop written and communication skills as part of work logs and presentations. On ESOL programmes, tutors correct learners' pronunciation and ensure that learners have understood the correct tone and use of language before they move to the next topic, enabling learners to gain confidence in conversational speaking. Apprentices in carpentry and joinery further develop their mathematics skills. For example, they successfully calculate how many spindles are required to meet regulations when fitting a staircase, including calculating on the perpendicular slope of a staircase.

Most learners and apprentices make expected or better progress in their learning. On adult learning programmes, learners begin by completing courses in essential digital skills which lead them to higher levels of vocational and technical learning such as childcare and health and social care. Learners on digital skills courses talk confidently about new applications such as Kahoot that they can use to engage more with their children's education. However, level 3 business administration apprentices make slow progress. Leaders and managers have identified this issue and have put actions in place to help apprentices to catch up. However, the impact of actions has not yet been seen, and too many of these apprentices continue to make slow progress.

Staff provide a range of enrichment activities for learners and apprentices. These cover topics such as gambling awareness, sexual health, mental health and knowing your community. Learners and apprentices also access and gain Duke of Edinburgh's Awards, take part in volunteering opportunities and participate in charitable events including raising money for foodbanks and homeless charities. Learners with high needs take part in weekly physical activities including dance, street soccer, camping and sporting activities with Sheffield United Football Club. They also benefit from

activities to help transition to adulthood, including cooking, cleaning, travel training and community projects.

Leaders have established an experienced advisory board which includes an elected member as chair, and which provides highly effective challenge on the quality and performance of education programmes provided. Members bring a wide range of skills and experience to the board, including from further education and industry and on safeguarding. Leaders provide helpful reports to the board that detail the quality and performance of programmes and up-to-date information on how learners are being safeguarded.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers have in place comprehensive policies and procedures that they use to keep learners and apprentices safe. They promote these effectively with learners and apprentices who report any concerns appropriately.

Designated safeguarding leads are appropriately trained and experienced for their roles. They seek frequent advice from the safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty officers within the council to keep up to date with local risks. They cascade this information to staff, who frequently share it with learners and apprentices, including information on how to stay safe online using smartphone applications.

Staff promote safeguarding and well-being with learners and apprentices well as part of tutorials and reviews, and through external agencies that offer workshops in appropriate personal relationships and the risks of knife crime.

Staff ensure that learners and apprentices have a good understanding of peer-on-peer abuse and what constitutes a healthy relationship. Learners and apprentices are confident that any concerns that they raise will be dealt with swiftly.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Ensure that level 3 business administration apprentices are fully supported to catch up and complete their apprenticeships successfully.
- Ensure that employers are fully involved in reviews of apprentices' progress on the level 3 business administration apprenticeship so they can work with tutors to plan learning to address skills gaps.

Provider details

Unique reference number	54349
Address	Floor 9 – North Wing Moorfoot Building Sheffield S1 4PL
Contact number	0114 403 1007
Website	www.lifelonglearningandskills.org
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Eleanor Churchward
Provider type	Community Learning and Skills – Local Authority
Date of previous inspection	13–16 June 2017
Main subcontractors	Sheffield Hallam University DN Colleges Group The University of Sheffield The Sheffield College Estio Training Ltd JGA Limited Barnsley College MBKB Limited Leeds College of Building Bishop Burton College

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of lifelong learning and skills 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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