

North West Community Services Training Ltd

Report following a monitoring visit to a 'requires improvement' provider

Unique reference number:	53611
Name of lead inspector:	Alison Cameron Brandwood, His Majesty's Inspector
Inspection dates:	12 and 13 September 2023
Type of provider:	Independent learning provider
Address:	Maggie O'Neill Community Centre 433 Liverpool Road Huyton Liverpool L36 8HT

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

North West Community Services Training Ltd (NWCS) was inspected in December 2022. At that time, inspectors judged the overall effectiveness of the provision to require improvement.

The focus of this monitoring visit was to evaluate the progress that leaders and managers have made in resolving the main areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

NWCS is based in Knowsley, Merseyside. At the time of the visit, the provider has 91 apprentices, just under two-thirds of whom are aged over 19 years and around one third are aged 16 to 18. Apprentices follow five standards-based apprenticeships at levels 2 and 3. Most apprentices study apprenticeships at level 3. Just under two thirds of apprentices study early years apprenticeships, around one quarter study teaching assistant apprenticeships and a few study business, and team leader/supervisor apprenticeships. Leaders work with employers across the North West of England.

Themes

How much progress have leaders made in implementing rigorous quality processes to identify and improve the weaknesses in the quality of education that apprentices receive?

Insufficient progress

Leaders and managers have made insufficient progress in implementing rigorous quality processes at NWCS. Leaders have put in place a range of developments to address the weaknesses in the quality of education. However, they have not ensured that managers have successfully improved the quality of education that apprentices receive.

Since the previous inspection, most of the curriculum leaders and training officers have left NWCS. Leaders have unsuccessfully tried to recruit new staff. Consequently, most of the improvements that leaders had planned or started to put in place are unsustainable. A few apprentices are concerned that the many changes in training officers will mean that they do not complete their apprenticeships on time. They are worried that this may hinder their progression to their next steps.

Board members and managers have reviewed the apprenticeships they offer. They no longer offer apprenticeships in business, team leadership or adult care. Leaders have decided to focus on providing apprenticeships in early years and teaching assistants. Just below half of the early years and teaching assistant apprentices who have completed their final assessments achieve high grades.

What progress have board members made in providing sufficient scrutiny, support and challenge to leaders to bring about swift improvements in the quality of education and training that apprentices receive?

Insufficient progress

Board members have made insufficient progress in providing effective scrutiny and challenge to leaders and managers. They have focused on leading the changes and improvements at NWCS instead of providing effective oversight of the implementation of the new processes. Managers do not provide the board with suitable reports on the impact of the actions that are in place. Consequently, board members do not know whether these actions are effective.

How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that they use the information they gather on apprentices' starting points to plan an ambitious apprenticeship?

Insufficient progress

Training officers do not systematically use apprentices' starting point information to plan an ambitious apprenticeship. Since the previous inspection, leaders have strengthened their process for collecting information about what apprentices already know and can do. However, training officers do not use the information effectively or routinely to plan the curriculum for apprentices. For example, a few apprentices who have been on their apprenticeship for six months have still not had the mathematics tuition that they need.

What progress have leaders made in ensuring that apprentices' off-the-job training is coordinated effectively with employers so that apprentices can practise what they have learned to develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours quickly?

Insufficient progress

Managers do not ensure that training officers effectively coordinate apprentices' off-the-job training with employers. Training officers do not routinely plan most apprentices' learning in the workplace with employers.

Apprentices who make good progress in developing their knowledge, skills and behaviours in work do so because their line managers give them the opportunities to practise their skills. Line managers arrange additional training for apprentices. For example, early years apprentices learn about managing children's behaviour and safe sleeping. They confidently complete 10-minute sleep checks while children are napping.

What progress have leaders made in providing apprentices with a broad curriculum beyond their vocational training that supports their personal development? **Reasonable progress**

Leaders have planned and implemented an effective personal development curriculum. Apprentices benefit from a calendar of topics, including employment rights and responsibilities and knife crime. Training officers routinely use this information to inform discussions with apprentices.

Apprentices complete a range of online training such as emotional intelligence and financial skills. They enhance their knowledge of subjects, including menopause awareness and alcohol awareness, through a suite of video modules. Employers provide a wide range of job-related training. For example, teaching assistant apprentices attend training in gastro pumps and phonics. A few apprentices take part in school football competitions or raise money for charities.

Most apprentices have a secure understanding of fundamental British values. They apply these routinely at work. For example, teaching assistant apprentices demonstrate the values of respect and tolerance to colleagues, parents and children. Early years apprentices communicate appropriately and professionally with speech and language therapists.

How much progress have leaders made in providing apprentices with access to a high-quality careers programme that helps them make informed choices on their longer-term career goals? **Insufficient progress**

Leaders have made insufficient progress in providing apprentices with access to a high-quality careers programme that helps them to make informed choices about their longer-term career goals.

Leaders have developed a clear strategy for careers education, information, advice and guidance. The policy outlines suitable objectives that leaders have designed around the Gatsby benchmarks. However, managers have not implemented the careers strategy systematically. They do not know whether the objectives they have outlined are in place or how effective they are. Apprentices know about the online tools and resources that inform them about future progression routes. However, they are not aware of any other opportunities that they can access to explore their longer-term career goals.

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 2023