

# V Learning Network, trading as Step into Learning Ltd

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

---

<b>Unique reference number:</b>	52983
<b>Name of lead inspector:</b>	Sarah Alexander, His Majesty's Inspector
<b>Inspection dates:</b>	27 and 28 September 2023
<b>Type of provider:</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Address:</b>	The Orchard Centre Blind Hole Market Street Launceston PL15 8AU

# Monitoring visit: main findings

## Context and focus of visit

V Learning Network was inspected in November 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.

At the time of the monitoring visit, 24 learners with high needs and one learner aged 16 to 18 studied a range of vocational and employability courses. Six adults studied access to higher education courses in health and social care and social science at level 3, and 33 studied counselling courses at level 4.

## Themes

### **What progress have leaders and trustees made in strengthening oversight of the provision and of the safeguarding arrangements for learners studying with the subcontractors? Reasonable progress**

Leaders have improved the information they review to quality assure their training. A new suite of valuable reports, including monthly and quarterly quality reviews for each subcontractor, is now discussed by senior leaders at the monthly advisory board meetings. These reports summarise well a range of key performance indicators, which leaders use to evaluate the effectiveness of the training provided.

Trustees hold effective monthly board meetings, which they use well to challenge leaders on improvement and safeguarding priorities. Updates from leaders' quality assurance process, alongside new standardised agendas and papers, are used effectively in the meeting. These supply trustees with the information they need to hold meaningful discussions. For example, recent papers included a plan by one subcontractor to change the level of qualifications they offer. Trustees were able to challenge this decision, requesting clarity on the rationale, and as such were able to ensure that leaders were confident in the decision being made.

Leaders have improved their safeguarding processes, including developing a valuable new cross-subcontractor forum that brings together the designated safeguarding leaders (DSLs) and their deputies. The new safeguarding group meets frequently to discuss updates and to work collaboratively to produce monthly newsletters that identify useful updates, training and resources to support keeping learners safe. Leaders track the dissemination and impact of the newsletter and updates well, using

a tracker that subcontractors complete to identify any changes they have made in response and how updates have been shared. The DSL produces useful monthly safeguarding papers, which are also reviewed at advisory board meetings. Leaders have been successful in adding additional expertise to the board of trustees by appointing a safeguarding specialist with extensive relevant experience. Leaders now review safeguarding as a standing item at advisory board and trustee meetings.

**What progress have leaders made to ensure that the quality of the content, planning, sequencing, and teaching of the curriculum, including safeguarding topics, for learners with high needs prepares them for adulthood?**

**Insufficient progress**

Leaders have not acted quickly enough to ensure that all subcontractors plan and sequence an ambitious curriculum for learners with high needs that prepares them well for adulthood. Leaders have overseen a new process for target setting that considers learners' aspirations and intended outcomes, but this has been too slow to have a significant impact on learners in the second or subsequent year of study. As a result, curriculum plans for these learners are not sufficiently focused on the incremental targets learners need to achieve to prepare them for their next steps beyond training.

Leaders have not ensured that all staff working with learners with high needs are clear of the expectations of education, health and care plan progress reviews. Not all staff are aware of how they should use reviews to assess the impact of provision and inform next steps for learners so that they can work towards agreed outcomes. As a result, the curriculum is not yet sequenced sufficiently well to prepare learners for their next steps.

However, leaders have ensured that safeguarding topics are appropriately selected and coherently sequenced as part of the curriculum for learners with high needs. Leaders have worked with consultants to design a suitable programme and build appropriate resources to support teaching. For example, topics such as radicalisation and extremist behaviour are taught in the first session and then revisited throughout the curriculum. As a result, learners now meet these topics earlier in their programme and build their understanding incrementally over time.

**What progress have leaders made to ensure that learners on employability courses and learners with high needs take part in meaningful work experience and work-related activities relevant to their career ambitions?**

**Insufficient progress**

Leaders have not yet put in place suitably ambitious plans for all learners to take part in meaningful work experience and work-related activities. For example, too many learners do not have the opportunity to further deepen and develop their learning between block placements, which are a year apart. As a result, learners do not get the opportunity to practise the skills and behaviours they learn and develop them at the pace expected.

In the best instances, leaders have put in place multiple opportunities for their learners to experience work-related activities as part of their learning plan. For example, leaders organise preparation for work activities, such as practice interviews and visits to employers ahead of an 18-week placement in terms two and three. Learners attend these placements once per week, supported by provider staff. As a result, many of these learners move into stable, longer-term volunteer positions at their work placements and continue to develop the workplace behaviours that prepare them for adulthood.

Leaders rightly acknowledged the need for additional resource to support subcontractors in identifying and providing meaningful work-related activities for learners. Leaders have recently recruited a work placement officer and a careers coordinator to support the implementation of work placement plans. However, these are recent appointments and are yet to have a meaningful impact on learners.

Leaders have put in place a suitable curriculum for learners in order to prepare them for their work placements. For example, the new enrichment curriculum, implemented in September 2023, includes content on workplace behaviours such as timekeeping and travel training. As a result, the curriculum is suitably planned for these activities, but the impact of these actions is yet to be seen.

**What progress have leaders made to ensure that teachers and support staff working with learners with high needs are trained in and understand how to meet the specific needs of their learners?**

**Insufficient progress**

Leaders and managers have appointed additional staff to support the development of tutors' knowledge and skills for teaching learners with high needs. Leaders have chosen to work with an experienced special educational needs consultant, who has been working with Step into Learning since July. Leaders have used this resource to identify training needs for staff across the organisation, including the subcontractors, and have planned training sessions for staff. For example, leaders have identified the need to develop a training package for tutors to support learners to manage their emotions through coaching. This is due for delivery at the end of September 2023.

Leaders have put in place valuable new quality assurance and improvement processes, which they plan to use to identify any specific training needs for staff

working with learners with high needs. New monitoring processes are well aligned to identifying the progress learners are making and if their needs are being fully met. As a result, leaders now have the resource to deliver effective training linked to learners with high needs and the means to identify where it is needed. They also have the necessary processes to assess the impact of the training once it has been completed. However, the training, while planned, has not yet taken place. As a result, there is no identifiable impact on learners.

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](mailto: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/](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2023