

# North West Training Council

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

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<b>Unique reference number:</b>	53615
<b>Name of lead inspector:</b>	David Towsey, His Majesty's Inspector
<b>Inspection dates:</b>	29 and 30 November 2023
<b>Type of provider:</b>	Independent learning provider
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## Monitoring visit: main findings

### Context and focus of visit

North West Training Council (NWTTC) was inspected in January 2023. 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.

NWTTC provides apprenticeships in advanced manufacturing technologies and engineering. At the time of the visit, there were 358 apprentices enrolled on level 3 apprenticeships. There were 105 apprentices studying the level 3 food and drink maintenance engineer apprenticeship, 78 on the level 3 engineering fitter apprenticeship, 68 on the level 3 engineering technician apprenticeship, 66 on the level 3 installation electrician and maintenance electrician apprenticeship, 15 on the level 3 fire emergency and security systems technician apprenticeship, 11 on the level 3 science industry maintenance technician apprenticeship, nine on the level 3 machining technician apprenticeship and six on the level 3 maintenance and operations engineering technician apprenticeship. There were 75 apprentices under the age of 19.

### Themes

#### **How much progress have leaders and managers made in putting in place robust and effective quality assurance processes? Reasonable progress**

Since the previous inspection, leaders have improved their quality assurance processes. Leaders now focus closely on checking the quality of apprentices' training. They now assess apprentices' existing knowledge, skills and behaviours at the start of their apprenticeship and track systematically how they are improving these as a result of their training. Leaders use this information to identify effectively whether apprentices are making the progress that they should.

Leaders have identified correctly most of the areas where they need to improve their provision. This means that leaders now have a more accurate overview of most of the strengths and weaknesses at NWTTC. They use this information to make improvements. For example, they ensure that staff now focus on apprentices' progress in developing their knowledge, skills and behaviours rather than placing too much emphasis on the criteria contained in the qualifications of the apprenticeship. However, it is too early to see the full impact of most of these improvements.

Managers do not give tutors clear and constructive feedback on the quality of their teaching practice or how it could be improved. This means that tutors' teaching practice does not improve swiftly following observations of teaching.

**How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices understand what they need to do in their final assessments?**

**Reasonable progress**

Staff now provide most apprentices with detailed information about their final assessments when they start their apprenticeship. They give guidance to apprentices and employers on what apprentices will need to do in their final assessments and on what grades they can achieve. Apprentices know what they need to do to achieve merit or distinction grades in their final assessments. This gives apprentices more understanding of what the assessments will include and confidence when their final assessments are approaching.

Staff prepare apprentices effectively for their final assessments. Apprentices value the support that they receive from staff. Tutors conduct mock interviews with some apprentices in their final year and help them to develop their writing skills in preparation for their assessment. They schedule additional teaching sessions for these apprentices to help them fill gaps in their knowledge before they take their final assessments. As a result, nearly all apprentices complete their apprenticeships successfully and on time. However, it is too early to see the impact of these new processes as to whether apprentices achieve the grades for which they are capable.

**How much progress have leaders and managers made in working with all employers to plan and coordinate apprentices' on- and off-the-job training?**

**Reasonable progress**

Since the previous inspection, leaders have worked closely with employers to develop the planning of apprentices' training. By communicating closely with employers when they plan apprenticeships, leaders have improved the coordination of on- and off-the-job training. Level 3 food and drink maintenance engineer apprentices now learn electrical skills in the first year rather than the third year of their apprenticeship so that they can apply and practise, under supervision, these skills when they are installing wiring at work.

Leaders work effectively with most employers to ensure that apprentices apply what they have learned in their training to projects that they complete at work. Most employers visit apprentices when they are studying at the training centre to observe the new skills they are developing and to plan for how they will apply these skills at work. Staff work with managers from a large employer so that their level 3 engineering technician apprentices practise the repair skills they have learned swiftly to drill and tap bolts on wheels when they snap.

However, conversely, a few employers are not aware of what their apprentices are learning in their training. Staff do not work effectively with these line managers to plan how their apprentices will apply their training at work.

**How much progress have leaders and managers made in providing apprentices with high-quality careers advice? Reasonable progress**

Since the previous inspection, leaders have created a suitably planned programme of careers education, information, advice and guidance. They now ensure that apprentices who have started their apprenticeships most recently benefit from useful information and guidance on their next steps. Staff work with employers to give first-year apprentices opportunities to shadow other roles at work, ensuring that they learn about the different roles that they could progress into when they complete their apprenticeship.

Apprentices who started their apprenticeship before September 2023 have not benefitted as much from leaders' improvements. Staff provide apprentices in their second or later year of study with useful information about progression to higher-level courses, such as university degrees and higher-level apprenticeships. However, they give them limited guidance on the wider career opportunities available to them when they complete their apprenticeship.

**How much progress have leaders and managers made in providing board members with high-quality, detailed information that will enable board members to hold leaders to account? Reasonable progress**

Leaders have improved the type and quality of information that they provide to members of the board of trustees. Leaders now provide board members with useful information in advance of each of their meetings about the financial performance of the business and, separately, the quality of education. For example, leaders provide a summary of their actions and minutes of their monthly apprenticeship management meetings. This information enables board members to consider the quality of apprentices' training appropriately.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have started to attend every meeting of the board of trustees. At these meetings, members of the board hear from and question senior leaders and other managers closely. They use the information that they receive from trustees to scrutinise leaders' actions in detail and match this closely to the areas that they need to improve. Trustees challenge leaders when they do not provide sufficient information about their progress in making improvements. This means that members of the board of trustees now hold leaders to account more effectively.

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