

# Short inspection of South Tyneside Council

Inspection dates:

24 and 25 January 2024

## **Outcome**

South Tyneside Council continues to be a good provider.

## **Information about this provider**

South Tyneside Council is a local authority provider. Leaders subcontract a high proportion of the provision to 22 subcontractors. Education and training courses are delivered at locations in South Tyneside, and other towns in the North East. At the time of the inspection, there were 396 adult learners studying subjects such as functional skills in mathematics and English, manufacturing, health and adult care programmes. Most learners study courses at entry level, level 1 and level 2 with a few enrolled to level 3 programmes. There were 117 adult learners studying community learning courses. The council also provides study programmes for learners aged 16 to 19 years. At the time of the inspection there were 77 younger learners on courses such as warehousing, construction and motor vehicle.

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

Learners value and enjoy learning new life skills throughout their training. Mathematics teachers use examples that learners will encounter in their everyday lives, such as the annual percentage rates on credit cards and fixed rate mortgages. Learners become more skilled in checking their own bank details and mortgage terms as their understanding of how changes to interest rates affect their own household budgets improves.

Most learners, including those at the subcontractors and those with additional learning needs, achieve well and a high proportion develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours that they need to secure employment or move on to further study. For example, those studying level 1 adult care benefit from the strong links the council has with employers. When they achieve their qualification, a high proportion of learners secure employment in the care sector or progress to care programmes at level 2.

Learners feel safe and know how to raise concerns should they need to. They have a good understanding of potential risks to their safety, such as the risk of radicalisation

from right wing extremist groups. Learners know how to keep themselves safe from these risks.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum to meet the needs of residents, businesses and employers across South Tyneside. Courses are selected based on South Tyneside priorities in areas such as manufacturing, engineering, health and social care and a wide range of other subjects. Leaders very actively engage with key employers to understand fully the skills required in each sector. Staff from the council and the subcontractors attend advisory boards and employer forums across South Tyneside. Information from those events is then used to inform curriculum design and new provision.

Leaders have in place very thorough and effective subcontracting arrangements across all 22 of their delivery partners. They carefully select subcontractors through a rigorous application process. Subcontractors must demonstrate their capacity to deliver high-quality education. Council leaders closely monitor the performance of subcontractors to ensure that they meet their contractual obligations and provide the expected quality of education and training. Leaders at subcontractors are very positive about the support that they receive from council staff that helps to continually improve the quality of the courses that they deliver.

Staff plan a clear and coherently sequenced curriculum. This helps learners to develop the skills, knowledge and behaviours that they need for work or further study. For example, in level 1 adult care teachers first introduce learners to the care sector, explaining the variety of roles learners could apply for and duties that they would undertake. This helps learners make well informed choices about their potential next course of study or employment. Learners then progress on to study topics such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder training, food safety and first aid courses. This helps learners make well informed choices about their potential next course of study or employment.

Teachers are well qualified, subject specialists. Most have many years teaching experience and hold degree level or specialist vocational qualifications. For example, teachers in manufacturing have significant experience of quality management roles within the industry. They use their understanding of the sector to ensure that learners produce work of a high quality that is aligned to the precise professional standards expected by employers. In addition, leaders provide support for staff to improve their teaching practice, such as specialist training for mathematics teachers.

Teachers mark learners work and track their progress accurately. They provide learners with useful, constructive feedback to help them understand the areas that they need to improve. For example, learners in functional skills mathematics complete frequent quizzes and short assessments. Teachers add useful comments on their completed work that shows clearly where learners have gone wrong. This helps learners to improve their grasp of mathematics over time.

Learners benefit from effective careers information, advice and guidance which enables them to make informed choices about their next steps and future careers. They attend talks from employers about career options in different sectors, including the opportunity to progress to an apprenticeship or other employment with training.

Teachers support learners effectively to improve their skills in applying for jobs, including producing a good-quality curriculum vitae. Learners aged 16 to 19 years attend helpful careers sessions with well qualified staff about their aspirations and the opportunities available in the area. They are very positive about the quality of guidance they receive. Learners also take part in relevant work experience or other work-related activity throughout their course. Most learners progress to positive destinations such as employment, apprenticeships or further study.

In a few instances, teachers do not check well enough whether learners have a secure grasp of the curriculum before moving on to more advanced topics. For example, in level 2 business improvement techniques, those teaching 'Kaizen methodology' as a new concept do not check whether learners understand the core principles that underpin the methodology. This delays progress for a few learners as they have gaps in their understanding that need to be addressed later in the course.

In too many instances, staff do not take account of learners' starting points well enough. Although staff complete an initial assessment with learners, they do not always take account of what learners know, or do not know, when planning or reviewing learning. For example, in subcontracted level 1 motor vehicle provision, learners on study programmes do not receive a diagnostic assessment of their mathematical or English ability. Teachers repeat topics that learners already know and do not have a clear plan to address the gaps that they have in their knowledge of these subjects which impedes their progress.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders respond effectively to safeguarding concerns and risks. Staff know how to raise any concerns, and leaders at all subcontractors report immediately to the council's safeguarding lead when a concern is identified or a disclosure is made. This is recorded, and the safeguarding lead maintains contact with the subcontractor to keep updated on further actions, support, progress towards closure of cases or onward referral to specialist personnel as required. However, in a very few instances, recording is not precise enough and it is not explicitly recorded when all safeguarding instances have been closed.

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

- Ensure that all safeguarding concerns are fully and explicitly recorded, including when cases are closed.

- Ensure that all staff take account of learners' individual starting points so that learners make progress to realise their full potential.
- Ensure that staff check that all learners have a secure grasp of subjects before moving on to teach more complex topics.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	54492
<b>Address</b>	Town Hall Westoe Road South Shields NE33 2RL
<b>Contact number</b>	0191 424 6592
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.southtyneside.gov.uk">www.southtyneside.gov.uk</a>
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Jonathan Tew
<b>Provider type</b>	Local authority
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 and 2 February 2017
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	Utraining Limited Learning Concepts Limited Key Subject Tuition Limited Training in Childcare Limited Lokman Training Limited Chameleon Training Limited Lomax Training Limited Logistics Training and Consultancy Limited

## Information about this inspection

The inspection was the second short inspection carried out since South Tyneside Council was judged to be good in February 2017.

The inspection team was assisted by the employment and skills manager - quality assurance, 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

Ian Frear, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Steve Hailstone

Senior His Majesty's Inspector

Alfie Wilkinson

Ofsted Inspector

Rhys Davies

Ofsted Inspector

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 2024