

# Short inspection of Cheshire West and Chester Council

Inspection dates:

22 and 23 May 2024

## **Outcome**

Cheshire West and Chester Council continues to be a good provider.

## **Information about this provider**

Cheshire West and Chester Council manages its community learning and skills provision within the council's skills and employment team. Learners attend a range of accredited and non-accredited long and short courses. They study courses from pre-entry level to level 2. Most learners follow courses at level 1 or below. Leaders work with twelve subcontractors, all of which provide education to adult learners. Learning takes place across four 'work zones' and in a range of subcontractor and community venues across the borough. Most learners study courses in information technology (IT) and digital skills, English, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), construction, forklift truck operations, and mindfulness and mental health awareness.

At the time of the inspection, there were 223 adult learners and nine learners with high needs aged between 16 and 25 who were on a supported internship programme. There were 82 learners enrolled on courses with five subcontractors. Half of the current subcontracted learners followed courses in ESOL.

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

Learners enjoy learning in a welcoming and friendly environment, where they build their confidence and feel empowered. They appreciate the supportive staff, who help them to develop their confidence. For many learners, such as those on the supported internship programme, this is the first time in their lives that they have achieved success. Learners studying IT courses describe their experience as 'life changing'.

Learners make good progress on their programmes. They develop the knowledge and skills that they need to help them in their lives. As a result of improving their spoken English, ESOL learners are able to make appointments and book train and bus tickets. Most learners move on to further study or into work following the completion of their course.

Learners feel safe on their courses and at their work placements. Safeguarding information is available in a variety of different languages. Learners know who they can turn to for help should they need it.

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

Cheshire West and Chester Council is a good provider. Leaders, managers and governors are ambitious and aspirational for their learners. They align their curriculums effectively to meet local skills, employment and community needs. Learners move into work, and improve their health, well-being and resilience because of the knowledge and skills that they develop on their course. Supported interns gain a range of technical and life skills suitable for employment. They understand the importance of wearing personal protective equipment. Learners who have autism spectrum condition wear gardening gloves when planting flowers even though they find this uncomfortable.

Leaders work collaboratively with their subcontractors. They hold subcontractor staff to account for the quality of education that learners receive. Leaders identified that learners' attendance at the subcontractor who provides ESOL courses was too low. They worked with leaders at the subcontractor to identify and implement improvements. Although learners' attendance has improved, leaders continue to work with subcontractor staff to improve it further.

Leaders ensure that tutors plan and sequence the curriculum effectively so that learners build their knowledge and skills over time. Learners who have basic digital skills, start by learning how to produce and format a document. They progress on to inserting images and videos into electronic presentations. Leaders do not routinely ensure a consistent approach to how employers contribute to the design and implementation of the curriculum. In a few instances, the curriculum is largely developed around criteria from qualification units.

Most learners benefit from good-quality teaching and learning. Tutors use a range of activities, including repetition and peer demonstration, to help learners to remember more for longer. Most tutors use questioning skilfully to check what learners know and can do. They address misconceptions and correct errors swiftly in lessons. Most learners make good progress from their starting points.

Leaders do not ensure that tutors routinely set targets for learners that will help them to fulfil their potential. On accredited courses, tutors track learners' academic progress effectively. However, they do not routinely target and monitor the development of learners' wider skills, such as confidence or communication. Supported interns are clear about the personal targets that they are working towards. However, leaders do not ensure that they are set specific work-based targets. Employers do not know the skills that learners need to develop at work. Consequently, they do not adjust work-based tasks accordingly.

Learners benefit from effective careers advice and guidance. They receive impartial initial advice and guidance before they start their course. Tutors provide guidance to learners about future learning or employment options. Learners receive ongoing independent information and advice, including from employment support officers, the National Careers Service, local employers, and recruitment agencies. Most learners feel that they are well informed about their career choices and next steps. They appreciate how the tailored guidance that they receive prepares them for the future.

Leaders provide reports to governors that contain relevant information about the curriculums, including the commissioning of subcontracted provision. Governors provide support and scrutiny to leaders. They challenge leaders on aspects including how effectively the curriculums meet sector needs.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

- Ensure that there is a consistent approach to how employers contribute to the design and implementation of the curriculum.
- Ensure that tutors target and monitor learners' wider skills development so that they fulfil their potential.
- Ensure that supported interns are set specific work-based targets so that employers adjust work-based tasks accordingly.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	58930
<b>Address</b>	The Portal Wellington Road, Ellesmere Port Chester Cheshire CH65 0BA
<b>Contact number</b>	0151 356 6767
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk">www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk</a>
<b>Skills and employment manager</b>	Matthew Smith
<b>Provider type</b>	Community learning and skills
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	7 and 8 March 2018
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	CHAWREC Create & Develop Dragon Football Academy Empeiria Training Impact Ellesmere Port CIC M.I.Y & Co Neston Cybercentre Thomas Truck Training Ltd Three Dimensional Training Train to Change (UK) Ltd Weaver Vale Housing Trust Youth Federation Limited

## Information about this inspection

The inspection was the second short inspection carried out since Cheshire West and Chester Council was judged to be good in March 2015.

The inspection team was assisted by the senior officer commissioning, performance & quality, 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

Alison Cameron Brandwood, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Suzanne Wainwright	His Majesty's Inspector
Zoe Ibbotson	His Majesty's Inspector
Ed Lack	Ofsted Inspector

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