Inspection of Northern Regeneration CIC

Inspection dates: 11 to 14 March 2025

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
The quality of education	**Inadequate**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Requires improvement**
Personal development	**Requires improvement**
Leadership and management	**Inadequate**
Apprenticeships	**Inadequate**
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Information about this provider

Northern Regeneration CIC is an independent learning provider with its head office in Scarborough. It offers construction apprenticeships, predominantly at level 2, in a range of national skills shortage subjects and one level 3 apprenticeship in electrical installation. At the time of this inspection, there were 139 apprentices enrolled at the provider, of whom around two thirds were aged 16 to 18. Almost all apprentices were male. In the last 12 months, leaders have started to provide Skills Bootcamps in a few construction subjects. However, at the time of this inspection there were no learners in training. Most apprentices attend day or short, block-release training at the Scarborough Skills Village. The new specialist scaffolding training takes place at the North Shields site in Northumberland.

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

Too few apprentices attend their off-the-job training sessions. Staff are too willing to allow apprentices to stay at work rather than attend taught sessions, and they do too little to help apprentices catch up the learning they miss from those sessions. When apprentices do attend training, too few receive demanding enough theoretical or practical training that pushes them to be more resilient, hardworking construction and skilled employees.

Most apprentices behave well. In functional skills, for example, apprentices work together effectively to solve mathematical problems, such as how to calculate the resistance in electrical circuits. However, in a few instances in level 2 joinery, apprentices use inappropriate language in their training sessions. This is not challenged well enough by trainers.

Apprentices have positive attitudes to their learning and enjoy their time at the training centre. They value learning about health and safety practices, such as in groundworks where apprentices learn how to lift and handle paving blocks without injuring their back. Apprentices appreciate learning about such techniques to safeguard their physical health.

Trainers create classroom environments in which apprentices feel comfortable and confident to share information about their personal experiences of life and work. Apprentices report that they feel safe and supported in the workplace and during their off-the-job training. They know that there are staff at the provider who would support them if there was a need to do so.

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

Leaders have been too slow to act on most of the areas for improvement from the previous inspection. Although the quality of teaching is poor, leaders have continued to expand their provision. Despite their good vocational knowledge, most trainers still need to complete appropriate assessor and teacher training qualifications. This is a longstanding improvement priority.

Too few apprentices complete their apprenticeship. Too many of those apprentices who are currently in training are already beyond their expected completion date. Too often, employers do not stay committed to their apprentices' training, or apprentices leave early to earn additional income as unskilled, but better paid, workers.

Trainers do not plan the curriculum content skilfully to enable apprentices to gain a secure knowledge of their subjects. For example, in level 2 site carpentry, too few apprentices have the underpinning knowledge, or hand skills, to practise roof construction adequately. This delays their own learning as well as that of their peers, who must wait for them to catch up. Apprentices on the scaffolding apprenticeship benefit from a curriculum that is more effectively sequenced.

Most teaching is of a poor quality, and trainers do not set work of an appropriate level for the apprenticeship being studied. Consequently, most apprentices' work is below the required standard of their apprenticeship. For example, level 2 site carpentry and level 2 bricklaying apprentices complete theoretical work at entry level 3 and level 1 as their main curriculum content. However, level 3 electrical installation apprentices complete work at the expected standard.

Trainers do not evaluate well enough apprentices' understanding or what learning may need to be revisited or reinforced. In too many subjects, such as in groundworks and site carpentry, trainers do not mark apprentices' work and so apprentices do not know how to improve. Staff do not make it clear enough to apprentices what knowledge, skills and behaviours they are developing.

Leaders' oversight of the quality of training is poor. Leaders do not recognise fundamentally weak teaching and assessment practices. They have in place processes to help them understand the quality of their provision, such as carrying out lesson visits. However, they do not use the information from these activities effectively to improve the quality of provision.

Trainers ensure that apprentices with identified additional learning needs receive the support they need to complete their apprenticeship. For example, in level 3 electrical installation, the few apprentices who applied for additional time to complete their examinations, due to their learning need, received extra time to complete their end-point assessment.

Those apprentices who need functional skills qualifications as part of their apprenticeship achieve these qualifications well. A high proportion pass at their first attempt, and those who fail pass at subsequent attempts. However, trainers do not routinely help apprentices to improve their English skills. Most trainers do not identify poor spelling and grammatical errors in apprentices' work. Consequently, apprentices continue to repeat mistakes in their theory work throughout their apprenticeship.

Apprentices develop and use mathematical skills appropriately as an integral part of their training and in their job roles. For example, groundworks apprentices use ratios effectively to ensure that the sand, cement and water mix is correct for screed footpaths. Electrical installation apprentices use Ohm's Law to determine electrical loads and the voltage requirements of electrical circuits.

Leaders use the expertise of guest speakers and local charities effectively to help apprentices understand matters such as drug and substance abuse, online safety and county lines. Leaders invite specialist partners, such as local sexual health charities, into the training centre to deliver sex education to apprentices.

In a few instances, apprentices are involved in community projects. These include completing groundworks for a local community garden, and fundraising for a construction charity which supports construction workers with a range of well-being issues.

Trainers do not provide apprentices with sufficient careers education, advice and guidance. Too few apprentices are clear about their potential next steps, including those at the end of their apprenticeship.

Non-executive directors (NEDs) do not hold leaders effectively to account. They rely too much on what they are told about the quality of provision by senior leaders. NEDs do not interrogate this information well enough to understand the strengths and critical areas for improvement in the provision. They consider that the quality of training is much better than it is.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Rapidly address the weaknesses in the planning, sequencing and delivery of apprenticeships so that all apprentices receive good-quality training.
- Provide apprentices with training that is appropriate to the level of the apprenticeship studied.
- Help apprentices attend their training days, using the information about what apprentices know and can do to coordinate their training with employers.
- Provide apprentices with high-quality, relevant careers information and guidance.
- Set and implement clear and measurable actions to improve the quality of teaching for apprentices.
- Provide employers and apprentices with information about the long-term merits of the apprenticeship so a higher proportion of apprentices stay and achieve.

Provider details

Unique reference number	2626884
Address	Scarborough Construction Skills Village Musham Bank Road, Eastfield Scarborough YO11 3XU
Contact number	01723 585009
Website	www.skills-village.co.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Graham Ratcliffe
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	1 to 4 November 2022
Main subcontractors	Not applicable

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the director of 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

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