

# Northern Care Training

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## Background information

### Inspection judgements

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

#### Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made on [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

### Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of the inspection, inspectors take account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body. Where appropriate, inspectors also consider the previous inspection report ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)), reports from the inspectorates' quality monitoring or annual assessment visits, and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection.

In addition to reporting on overall effectiveness of the organisation, its capacity to improve further, achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management, this inspection focused on specialist provision in:

- Health and social care

## Description of the provider

1. Northern Care Training Ltd (NCT) was established in October 2004 to provide training and assessment in National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) in the health and social care sector. NCT delivers NVQs at levels 2, 3 and 4 in health and social care and the registered managers' award. Additionally a small number of learners are following NVQs at levels 2 and 3 in business administration, NVQ at level 2 in road passenger vehicle driving and NVQs at levels 2, 3 and 4 in information, advice and guidance. NCT has a Train to Gain contract with Tyne and Wear LSC. Currently 114 learners are following health and social care, of whom 11 are on apprenticeships, 56 on NVQ level 2, 38 on NVQ level 3 and nine on NVQ level 4. Approximately 24% of learners are male and 5.25% are from a minority ethnic group.
2. NCT is run by two directors. Staff include a development manager, team leader, assessment centre co-ordinator, employer engagement manager, Skills for Life tutor, 10 assessors, and four administrators. The head office and training facility is situated in South Shields. NCT works with Prima Training NE Ltd as a main subcontractor. NCT is a subcontractor for Tyne and Wear Care Alliance and (Sunderland City Council).
3. NCT delivers training programmes throughout the north east of England. The region is the least populated in England. The minority ethnic composition of the working age population is 4% in the north east compared with 11% nationally. In the region 49.7% of pupils obtain five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C compared with 54.2% for England.

## Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Good: Grade 2
Achievement and standards	Good: Grade 2
Quality of provision	Good: Grade 2
Leadership and management	Good: Grade 2
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

## Sector subject area

Health and social care	Good: Grade 2
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## Overall judgement

### Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

4. Achievement and standards are good. Overall success rates for apprenticeships and Train to Gain programmes are high. However, timely success rates on Train to Gain programmes are poor. The take up of Skills for Life awards is good. Learners develop good workplace skills and many learners progress onto further learning programmes.
5. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good. Good use is made of all training opportunities. Teaching resources are used well to enhance learning. Progress reviews and assessment practice are effective and ensure learners make good progress. Employer responsiveness is good. Additional learning support is good.
6. Leadership and management are good. Staff opinions are highly valued and contribute to management actions. Communication is effective. Staff benefit from good staff development opportunities that are linked well to appraisal. Good partnership arrangements are in place. Strategic management is satisfactory. NCT has developed a systematic approach to planning for expansion. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Staff awareness of equality of opportunity is good. Recent changes to test learners' understanding have yet to be fully implemented. Effective safeguarding arrangements are in place.

### Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

7. NCT has a good capacity to improve. The company has expanded significantly in the last few years while maintaining high overall success rates. Good plans are in place to diversify the areas of delivery. Leadership and management are good. Quality improvement arrangements are effective overall, although some aspects are incomplete. Arrangements for sharing good practice are effective.
8. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. Staff have good involvement in the self-assessment process. The use of learner and employer feedback in self-assessment is satisfactory. The areas for improvement identified in the self-assessment report generally match inspection findings. However, many of the strengths were standard practice. The self-assessment grades were one grade lower than inspection grades.

### Key strengths:

- High overall success rates
- Good development of workplace skills

- Good teaching and learning
- Good additional learning support
- Good management of the provision
- Good partnership working

### Key areas for improvement:

- Poor timely success rates
- Some incomplete quality improvement systems

## Main findings

### Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

9. Achievement and standards are good. Overall success rates are high on Train to Gain programmes. In 2007/08, success rates were at 90% as are current in-year rates. While the good retention rate was identified in the self-assessment report success rates were not considered fully.
10. Learners demonstrate good workplace skills and increase in confidence. They are more aware of their responsibilities and understand the importance of adhering to policies and procedures. Learners develop good report writing skills. Self-assessment identified these skills as satisfactory.
11. The standard of work in learners' portfolios is at least satisfactory and much is good. Workbooks offer opportunities to produce good evidence of knowledge related to practice.
12. Timely success rates on Train to Gain programmes are poor. They were 49% in 2007/08 and have declined to 28% in the current year. This is in part due to an administrative error related to setting learning end dates. NCT has begun to set more realistic target dates for learners and developed a range of strategies to monitor individual learner progress more effectively.

### Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

13. The quality of provision is good, as are teaching and learning. This was partly identified in the self-assessment report. Assessors provide good learning opportunities during assessment visits using a range of methods. NCT is developing a wide range of resources to support assessors. These include sessions based on NVQ units with slides and resources which are delivered in the workplace using a laptop computer. Lesson plans are designed well using a range of methods to meet individual learning styles. Assessors encourage discussions with learners enabling them to fully explore specific topics using leaflets and information packs. NCT has devised NVQ unit projects to help learners to demonstrate their knowledge in their portfolios and make good progress towards completing their qualification.
14. Additional learning support is good. This was identified as satisfactory in the self-assessment report. All learners complete an initial assessment of literacy and numeracy followed by a diagnostic assessment where appropriate. Opportunities are available for learners to develop their basic skills and participation has increased from 14% to 24%. Plans are in place to further integrate literacy into the NVQ. Numeracy will continue to be delivered separately by a specialist tutor.



Specialist learning support is available to those learners with additional learning needs. A number of dyslexic assessments have been completed and support provided. Assessors visit the workplace regularly and are available between visits to clarify understanding of what is required for the next visit. Employers arrange work activities to support the NVO programme.

15. Assessment practice is effective. A thorough internal verification strategy includes observation of assessor practice, assessor standardisation meetings and support to assessors. Progress reviews are satisfactory.
16. NCT satisfactorily meets learners' needs and interests. Assessors maintain effective links with employers and training opportunities are regularly extended to other staff in addition to learners. NCT is very active locally within the care sector and supports employers to meet legislative requirements with regards to qualified staff.
17. Processes and associated documentation for information, advice and guidance are effective. To date, 45% of learners have progressed to higher levels of NVO, taking on additional responsibilities at work and a few are progressing to professional training.

## Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

18. Management of the provision is good. This strength was partly identified in the self-assessment report. NCT has a wide range of appropriate policies and procedures that are reviewed regularly. The management style is inclusive and supportive. Staff opinions are valued highly and contribute to management decisions. Teams meet regularly and action points are followed up effectively. Meetings clearly focus on learners' progress, programme issues and feedback from senior management meetings. Communication with staff is good and takes a wide variety of forms. A 'grow your own' policy of staff recruitment has been effective in selecting staff initially through a partnership with Remploy and the Shaw Trust following work-placements. These staff continue to be employed by NCT. The curriculum is tightly managed with a very structured programme. Training resources to support learning are good and managed well with effective financial controls.
19. Good staff development ensures staff are sufficiently qualified and occupationally competent. This strength was identified in the self-assessment report. All teaching staff are registered with the Institute of Learning and are pursuing appropriate teaching qualifications. Information, advice and guidance qualifications are promoted well to staff. Three staff have achieved these qualifications. A good staff appraisal system ensures that staff development needs are identified and met. Training is ongoing throughout the year.

Administrative staff have good opportunities to continue to develop including the opportunity to take business and management NVQs. New managers are all completing appropriate management training.

20. A good range of partnership working ensures NCT has opportunities to share good practice and engage with employers to the benefit of learners. NCT works closely with 49 care employers. The recently appointed employer engagement manager has a target of engaging with two new employers per month. Regular contact is maintained with existing employers through newsletters, emails and individual meetings. Wider training opportunities and partnership working are routinely offered and taken up. Wider partnerships are also in place with such organisations as the Care Alliance, Provider Forum, Business Link, Shaw Trust and Remploy which include the opportunity to share good practice, participate in standardisation meetings, and further develop equality and diversity practice. A number of local school links have been developed recently and the managing director and employer engagement manager work as ambassadors for the care sector.
21. Strategic management is satisfactory. The company has expanded quickly in the last few years and strategy has followed growth rather than the other way round. Recently a more systematic approach has been applied and better links have been developed between the strategic plan, the self-assessment report and the quality improvement plan. These have now come together in the recently developed operational plan which is beginning to provide effective links between strategic planning, operational management and quality systems. The company has diversified the type of NVQs it delivers, and the geographical areas it operates in which now include Cumbria.
22. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Targets are set for gender and race. NCT is currently exceeding its targets. However, due to the ineffective information systems more in-depth data in relation to specific courses is not available. Equality and diversity are promoted effectively to learners. However, the changes made to the review process and the new equality and diversity workbook are very recent and it is too soon to assess their affect on improving learners' understanding. Policies and procedures cover all appropriate legislation and NCT has recently benefited from an equality and diversity consultant reviewing all their policies and procedures. All staff have participated in equality and diversity training. NCT meets current government requirements on safeguarding learners and all staff have enhanced Criminal Records Bureau clearance.
23. Some quality improvement systems are incomplete. This area for improvement was partially identified in the self-assessment report. While many quality assurance arrangements are in place it is not clear how these arrangements bring about sustained improvement. For example, while an observation of teaching and learning system has been in place for some time, a number of sessions have been graded satisfactory or inadequate without clear actions in place to improve this overall teaching and learning profile. In addition the observation system does not include all learning processes and has only recently extended to include

observation of reviews. Key staff have only just been trained in observation. Feedback from learners is limited to formal questionnaires following induction and at the completion of the programme. Data systems to support quality improvement are incomplete. NCT has a limited capacity to collect and analyse data and the decision to invest in a management information system has been delayed. Data contributes to management planning however, the current system lacks capacity. NCT has correctly identified that some aspects of the management of its subcontractor are ineffective particularly in relation to observations of teaching and learning and monitoring of the timely achievement of learners taking road passenger NVQs.

## What learners like:

- The structured programme
- Being stretched
- 'Completing my literacy certificate'
- The informal approach to learning
- The professional discussions
- 'The NVQ has given me confidence'
- Very supportive, helpful, flexible and reliable staff
- 'I have learnt how to be a better carer and do my job better'

## What learners think could improve:

- Better access to books and resources including the internet for learners following the NVQ at level 4
- More workshops for learners following the NVQ at level 4
- 'More time at my workplace to complete the NVQ at level 4'
- The wording and repetition of questions in projects and workbooks on NVQs at levels 2 and 3

## Annex

## Learners' achievements

Success rate on work-based learning 'Train to Gain' programmes managed by the provider 2007 to 2008

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider NVQ rate**
Train to Gain ***	2007/08	overall	115	90
		timely	53	49
	2008/09	overall	66	90
		timely	16	28

Note: 2007/08 data is 'part year' only and is representative of the first three months or greater of the LSC contract year

\* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

\*\* Provider qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the 'Individual Learning Record'

\*\*\* Includes 'Train to Gain' long course NVQ provision, but not 'Skills for Life'