

Nacro

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 50170

Name of lead inspector: Diana Pinkney HMI

Last day of inspection: 29 January 2010

Type of provider: Voluntary organisation

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Information about the provider

1. Nacro is a national registered charity founded in 1966 and a company limited by guarantee. Its objectives are to reduce the number of people who commit crime, ensure the criminal justice system works fairly and effectively to reduce crime, and to work towards all prisoners being offered resettlement help relevant to their circumstances, in prison and on release. The training programmes are managed by Nacro's services directorate. Approximately 21% of Nacro's business is government-funded training.
2. The provider contracts with the Learning and Skills Councils (LSC) in the North East, the North West, Yorkshire and the Humber, the East and West Midlands, East of England, the South East, Greater London and the South West regions to provide work-based learning provision. Most of the provision consists of Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes at 54 sites with 1,349 learners. Only the E2E programmes were inspected. A further 87 learners in the Newcastle, Gateshead, Sheffield and Sandwell areas are on LSC-funded apprenticeships programmes provided through programme-led pathways in child care, small animal care, motor vehicle engineering and business administration. Nacro provides an employability skills programme (ESP) with 183 learners in Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire, Essex and Suffolk, funded by the East of England LSC with referrals by Jobcentre Plus. Part-time training is provided to young people aged 14 to 16 who are unable to access full-time provision within school or who have been excluded from school.
3. Nacro provides training programmes for young people who have not been successful at school. Many have not been in education or training for several years and many have been in care. Half are young offenders or known to the youth justice system. About 71% of learners are male and 9% are from minority ethnic backgrounds. National unemployment levels for young people aged 16 to 17 are almost 30% and increased by 13 percentage points during 2008/09.
4. Nacro provides training on behalf of the following providers:
 - IGEN, Leeds
 - Rathbones, Cumbria
 - Trinity Solutions, Newcastle.
5. The following organisations provide training on behalf of Nacro:
 - Abilities Ltd
 - Dartford YMCA
 - DV8
 - JHP
 - RendezVous
 - Tides.

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2008/09
Provision for young learners: 14 to16 Entry to Employment	979 part-time learners 4,415 full-time learners
Provision for adult learners: Further education (19+)	463 full-time learners 68 part-time learners
Employer provision: Apprenticeships	202 apprentices

Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 3
Capacity to improve	Grade 3
	Grade
Outcomes for learners	3
Quality of provision	3
Leadership and management	3
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	2
Subject Area	
Preparation for work	3

Overall effectiveness

6. Learners develop good personal skills and significantly improve their employability skills. They become more confident and work well together and individually. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory. Overall, learners' achievement of qualifications is good and improving, but their achievement of qualifications in literacy and numeracy is low. Progression by learners into further education, training or employment is low but improving.
7. Teaching is satisfactory overall and a good variety of interesting and enjoyable activities are used. Learners contribute well and enjoy their learning. Equality and diversity are promoted well in teaching and learning. Tutors do not always plan activities sufficiently to meet individual learners' needs. Learners' literacy and numeracy skills are often not developed sufficiently. Most teaching staff are suitably qualified. However, there are not enough suitably qualified staff for literacy, language and numeracy provision. The monitoring of learners' progress is insufficient and most target setting is too general. Learners have a wide range of learning opportunities but insufficient opportunities to participate in work placements. They receive good personal and individual support.
8. Managers provide clear direction to raise standards and set targets for success and progression but these are not always achieved. Capacity to improve is satisfactory. Arrangements to promote the safeguarding of learners are good

and safeguarding is given a high priority. Health and safety arrangements are thorough. Equality and diversity are managed and promoted well and learners and staff have a good understanding of equality and diversity issues. Engagement with learners to promote improvement is effective at centres, but is insufficiently developed for employers and other partners. The quality of provision varies considerably between, and within, centres. Accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory overall, but some centres do not have sufficient information and learning technology (ILT) resources.

Main findings

- Learners develop good personal, communication and vocational skills on the programme. They develop confidence and significantly improve their employability skills. The overall standard of learners' work is satisfactory.
- The achievement rate of qualifications is good overall and improving. However, the achievement of qualifications in literacy and numeracy is low. The rate of achievement of learners' key objectives on the E2E programme is also low. However, this has improved in the current year.
- Learners' progression rates into further education, training or employment are low. These declined in 2008/09 but have since improved. Rates of progression vary considerably between centres and, to a lesser extent, between regions.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In better sessions, tutors use a good variety of interesting and enjoyable activities. Volunteers provide good additional support. Equality and diversity are promoted well in teaching and learning. In some sessions, checking of individualised learning and learners' understanding and the development of literacy and numeracy are insufficient.
- Learners' progress is not monitored sufficiently. Some targets are too general, insufficiently specific and time-bound to measure progress effectively. The quality of target setting varies between centres and staff in centres. Reviews of learners' progress do not always cover all aspects of learning.
- Learners have a particularly wide range of learning opportunities at centres and in the community. Most centres have a good range of vocational programmes. Centres with motor vehicle and construction workshops provide realistic working and training environments. Nacro has increased the range of accreditation opportunities for learners.
- The provision for work placements is insufficient. In many of the centres there are not enough links with employers. Where work placements are established, the arrangements are supported well by staff.
- Learners receive good personal and individual support. Many learners have multiple barriers to learning and progression and staff work closely with learners to help them overcome these barriers. The support, advice and guidance provided are highly effective. Learners benefit from Nacro's effective links with support agencies.
- Senior managers provide clear leadership to raise standards and set targets for success and progression rates. However, these are not always achieved.

Operational management of the centres, regional activities and sub-contracting arrangements are good. Good use is made of data to plan and manage the E2E programmes.

- Arrangements to promote the safeguarding of learners are good. Safeguarding is given a high priority within the organisation. Staff have received awareness training and suitable policies and procedures are in place. Health and safety arrangements are thorough and learners and staff are provided with relevant training.
- Promotion of equality and diversity is good. Learners and staff have a good understanding of equality and diversity issues. Achievement gaps between most groups of learners have been closed. Nacro uses its national, regional and local equality and diversity plans effectively to help widen participation.
- Engagement with learners to support and promote improvement is effective. Staff respond well to learners' suggestions for improvements to the programme. However, results from learners' surveys are not used sufficiently. Engagement with employers and other stakeholders is insufficiently developed.
- The overall quality arrangements are satisfactory. The observation of teaching and learning process has improved, although its use across all centres is recent. However, the quality of provision varies significantly between, and within, centres. The self-assessment process is generally satisfactory. However, the supporting evidence for some judgements is not sufficiently evaluated.
- Resources are managed effectively. Accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory overall. Most teaching staff are suitably qualified, however not all centres have enough suitably qualified staff for literacy, language and numeracy provision. Some centres do not have sufficient ILT resources and insufficient use is made of e-learning.

What does Nacro need to do to improve further?

- Improve progression rates into further education, training and employment and increase the range and number of employers that offer suitable work placements or tasters to meet the needs of learners.
- Build on the developments in quality improvement and sharing of good practice to establish more consistency in effective performance across the provision.
- Improve progress reviews to include all aspects of the programme and make targets more specific to support achievement and progression.
- Further develop the planning of teaching and learning to meet the needs of individual learners, with sufficient qualified staff to deliver literacy, language and numeracy in each centre.
- Develop more effective engagement with employers and other stakeholders to support and inform improvement locally, regionally and nationally.
- Improve evaluation of the evidence to support judgements in the self-assessment report and make better use of information from learners' surveys to inform the self-assessment process and promote improvement.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the help and advice from approachable staff
- the acquisition of new skills
- the way they are treated as adults and with respect
- the help to improve their literacy and numeracy skills
- the development of confidence to find a job
- the positive response of staff to learners' suggestions
- the achievement of qualifications
- feeling safe at Nacro.

What learners would like to see improved:

- the support for dyslexia
- the variety in teaching methods
- the reduction in large size of groups
- the help with cross-referencing of their work
- the range of practical workshops
- the E2E programme, to add more structure to the course
- the availability of volunteer support.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the support provided by staff
- the regular feedback on learners' achievements and progress
- the quick response from staff to issues
- the briefing on work modules
- the good communications with Nacro
- the involvement in planning of learning.

What employers would like to see improved:

- No improvements were identified.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 3

9. Planning and operational management of the E2E programme is good. Senior managers provide clear leadership with a focus on improving achievement and progression rates. However, these are not always achieved. Outcomes for learners are satisfactory overall. Learners' achievements of qualifications have improved and are good. The development of learners' personal and employability skills and support for learners are good. Rates of progression and achievement of key objectives are low, but are currently improving.
10. The self-assessment process is satisfactory but some aspects of the self-assessment report are not sufficiently evaluative. Since the previous inspection, effective improvements have been made, particularly in the promotion of equality and diversity, widening the range of accreditation opportunities, and increasing the number of suitably qualified teaching staff. Insufficient progress has been made to address some key areas for improvement, in particular, monitoring of learners' progress and target setting, and variations in quality and performance across the provision.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 3

11. Learners progress well and develop a good range of skills on the E2E programmes. They improve their personal and communication skills, develop confidence and are better able to work effectively in teams and individually. Learners significantly improve their employability skills and social well-being during the programme. The overall standard of learners' work is satisfactory, with examples of high standards in motor vehicle portfolios.
12. Learners' attainment of their learning goals is satisfactory overall. Achievement of qualifications is good overall and improving. Many learners achieve their first qualification at Nacro. In 2008/09 the achievement rate increased to 62% from 56% in the previous year, although achievement rates for literacy and numeracy qualifications were low at 35% and 41% respectively. Progression into further education, training or employment is low at 45%, but has increased from 42% in 2008/09. Progression rates have varied from 44% in 2006/07 to 47% in 2007/08. Rates of progression vary between each LSC region and in 2008/09 ranged from 38% to 50%. Achievement rates for learners' key objectives are low at 48%, but have increased from 45% in 2008/09. Achievement and progression rates vary significantly between centres but are similar for most groups of learners.
13. Learners feel safe and protected from bullying and harassment in the centres and on work placements. Health and well-being are promoted well. Learners are well-informed about healthy eating and lifestyles choices and are encouraged to participate in a range of sport and fitness activities. They have

good access to support in overcoming dependency on alcohol, drugs and smoking.

14. Learners make effective contributions to community-based activities. Most have some active involvement in fundraising and charitable activities to benefit the community and disadvantaged groups. The voluntary activities and projects undertaken by learners contribute well to community cohesion.

The quality of provision

Grade 3

15. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Most tutors use their expertise effectively in the delivery of programme sessions. In the better sessions, tutors use a good variety of interesting and enjoyable activities. Tutors make effective use of trained volunteers to provide additional support. Learners make good oral contributions to sessions. In less effective sessions, tutors do not differentiate activities sufficiently to cater for the wide range of learners' needs, or check learners' understanding effectively. In some programmes too much use is made of generic lesson plans and workbooks, with insufficient variation of teaching methods to stimulate and maintain learners' interest. Equality and diversity are promoted well in teaching and learning. Initial assessment is satisfactory. However, staff do not always use this effectively to plan individual programmes in literacy and numeracy.
16. Resources are satisfactory or better overall, but vary between centres. Some centres have good practical resources and access to external facilities such as playing fields. Most teaching staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. Some centres do not have sufficient ILT resources and insufficient use is made of e-learning. Implementation of the information technology (IT) strategy is slow.
17. Learners' progress is insufficiently monitored. The quality of target setting for learners varies considerably between, and within, centres. Some targets are too general, and insufficiently specific and time-bound to measure progress effectively. Progress reviews do not always cover all aspects of learning.
18. Learners benefit from a particularly good range of learning opportunities at centres and in the community. Most centres have a good range of vocational programmes. Centres with motor vehicle and construction workshops provide realistic working and training environments. Nacro has developed foundation learning provision effectively and increased accreditation opportunities for learners.
19. Partnership working is satisfactory and benefits learners. Effective networking with other providers, schools and colleges provides learners with a broader choice of programmes and progression pathways. Some learners participate suitably in local partnership projects that promote social inclusion. However, few learners have opportunities to participate in work experience. Most centres have insufficient links with employers.

20. Care, guidance and support are highly effective. Learners receive good personal and individual support. Staff work closely with learners to help them resolve their diverse and significant barriers to learning. Learners have good access to mentors and to a wide range of referral agencies for specialist support on issues such as debt, criminality, housing and drug and alcohol abuse.

Leadership and management

Grade 3

21. Nacro has a clear strategic direction focused on achievement of the organisation's core objectives. Strategic and development planning is thorough and change is managed well. A recently completed merger of the housing and operations directorates provides a more comprehensive support service for learners. Senior managers provide clear leadership to raise standards and set targets for success and progression rates. However, these are not always achieved. Good use is made of data to plan and manage the E2E programmes. Operational management of the centres, regional activities and sub-contracting arrangements is good.
22. The board of trustees receives regular reports on the main elements of the programme and overview of performance. The trustees provide effective leadership, with direction and challenge for improvement. Governance arrangements are satisfactory.
23. Arrangements to promote the safeguarding of learners are good. Safeguarding has a high priority within Nacro and the organisation is meeting government requirements for the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. Comprehensive policies are established, with clear lines of reporting. Each region has several suitably trained child protection officers and a senior manager has lead responsibility. In some areas child protection officers are actively involved with the Local Safeguarding Board. Nacro works effectively with other agencies to protect vulnerable learners. All staff receive basic awareness training and updated training is planned. Criminal Bureau Record (CRB) checks, and List 99 checks for those employed before 2002, are carried out for designated staff and volunteers and recorded on a central register. Appropriate arrangements for risk assessments are in place. Nacro is preparing to implement fully the Independent Safeguarding Authority vetting and barring requirements. Contractors are monitored effectively for safeguarding and health and safety. Nacro has identified a need to further improve employers' understanding of safeguarding. Health and safety arrangements are thorough and learners and staff are provided with relevant training.
24. Equality and diversity are promoted well at Nacro. The programme has no entry requirements and some learners not meeting the eligibility requirements of other providers are accepted for training. Learners have a good understanding of equality and diversity issues. The promotion of equality and diversity is effectively embedded in teaching and learning across the range of programmes. Nacro has well-considered equality and diversity plans at national, regional and local levels. New staff undergo relevant corporate and local training in equality

and diversity and training programmes are run to update staff. Staff equality network groups are well supported within Nacro. Reasonable adjustments are made to the minority of centres with unsuitable access for people with restricted mobility. Subcontractors' equality and diversity arrangements are monitored effectively. Appropriate equality-impact assessments are undertaken and these are being further developed. There are no significant achievement gaps for different groups of learners by gender, ethnicity and disability. The achievement gap between offenders and non-offenders is reducing. A high proportion of learners receive additional learning support, but comparative achievement rates for these learners are not monitored.

25. Engagement with learners to support and promote improvement is effective. Each centre has a learners' forum and learners receive good support to facilitate their involvement. However, results from the learners' survey are not used effectively to inform improvement. Engagement with employers and other stakeholders is insufficiently developed.
26. The self-assessment process is satisfactory and makes use of Nacro's quality-improvement arrangements. The report is informed by centre and regional self-assessment reports, although the weighting and supporting evidence for some judgements are not sufficiently evaluated. The revised process for observation of teaching and learning is robust. However, its full implementation across centres is recent. The quality of provision varies significantly between, and within, centres.
27. Resources are managed effectively to secure value for money. Accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory overall. Arrangements for staff performance reviews are satisfactory. Good progress has been made to improve staff training and increase the number of suitably qualified teaching staff. However, not all centres have sufficient suitably qualified staff for literacy, language and numeracy provision.

Information about the inspection

28. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and five additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's assistant director for quality and performance, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the LSC, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
29. Inspectors used group and individual interviews and telephone calls. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed on behalf of the provider. They also observed learning sessions and progress reviews.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)
Nacro

Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; 16-18 Learner responsive: FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; 19+ responsive: FE full- and part-time courses; Employer responsive: Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16	16-18 Learner responsive	19+ Learner responsive	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners					
Full-time learners			1,349		
Part-time learners					
Overall effectiveness	3		3		
Capacity to improve	3				
Outcomes for learners	3		3		
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	3				
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	3				
How well do learners progress?	2				
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2				
How safe do learners feel?	2				
Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*	2				
How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*	3				
Quality of provision	3		3		
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	3				
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2				
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	3				
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2				
Leadership and management	3		3		
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2				
How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*	3				
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2				
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2				
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	3				
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	3				
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	3				

*where applicable to the type of provision

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