

Learn to Care

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 52954

Name of lead inspector: Nick Crombie HMI

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Type of provider: Independent learning provider

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Information about the provider

1. Learn to Care was founded in 2002 and is based in Herne Bay, Kent. In July 2007 Learn to Care became part of a group of companies owned by Enterprising Opportunities CIC which all operate as social enterprises. In November 2009 Learn to Care transferred its legal status to Enterprising Opportunities CIC.
2. Learn to Care contracts with the Skills Funding Agency in Kent under the Train to Gain programme, specialising in National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) in health and social care at levels 2 and 3. Train to Gain comprises around three-quarters of Learn to Care's income. All training and assessment take place in learners' workplaces. A small management and training team supports ten staff on the programme delivery team, six of whom are internal verifiers.
3. Learners work in a range of care settings throughout Kent. At the time of the inspection there was a total of 169 learners, of whom 106 were working towards level 2 and 63 towards level 3 qualifications. Eight learners were working towards a management NVQ at level 3. Learn to Care subcontracts a small part of its total provision involving ten learners at level 3.
4. The population of Kent is around 1.4 million, with a slightly lower percentage of economically active people of working age than the south east generally. The percentage of the population qualified to level 3 or above is 46%, compared to 51% in the south east and 47% nationally. The percentage claiming job seeker's allowance is 3.4%, slightly above the south east (3.0%) and below the national level (4.1%). Latest estimates indicate that the non-White, minority ethnic population of Kent is 6%, while 90% of the population is classified as White British.
5. The following organisation provides training on behalf of the provider/college:
 - Lynstead Children's Services (health and social care; children's care, learning and development NVQs).

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2008/09
Employer provision: Train to Gain	227 learners

Summary report

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

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Grade 2
	Grade
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	3
Equality and diversity	2
Subject Areas	Grade
Health and social care	2

Overall effectiveness

6. Learn to Care has successfully improved most aspects of its provision since the last inspection.
7. Outcomes for learners have steadily improved over time. For learners at advanced level, the rate at which learners complete their programmes in the specified time is well above the national rate. For learners at level 2 the rate has improved over time to slightly above the national rate. Learn to Care learners make good, and in some cases very rapid, progress through their qualification. Good arrangements are made for supporting any learners with domestic or work problems which hinder their progress.
8. Learners develop good practical skills underpinned by a good understanding of relevant theoretical aspects, improving their effectiveness at work and in some cases securing promotion. The standard of work in learners' portfolios meets the standards expected.
9. Group teaching is good. It challenges learners to think, express their professional views and develop knowledge in a mutually supportive environment. Individual teaching, for those in smaller companies or who prefer this to the group option, is also good with close attention to learners' preferred learning styles. Learn to Care focuses very effectively on identifying and

supporting literacy needs. Assessment practice is satisfactory, but the methods used are not sufficiently varied.

10. Good working relationships between managers, tutors, assessors and care managers help support each learner to progress. Care managers have a good understanding of the NVQ and support their learners.
11. Quality improvement arrangements are much improved at strategic level and at the point of learning delivery, although neither arrangements are sufficiently integrated. Learn to Care has very good arrangements for collecting and responding to learners' and employers' views. The quality of the sub-contracted provision is monitored very effectively.
12. Self-assessment and improvement action planning are satisfactory overall, but require a greater focus on brevity, evaluative judgements and clearer target setting.

Main findings

- Actions to further improve success rates have been effective. Outcomes for learners have steadily improved over time. In 2008/09 around 93% of level 3 learners achieved their qualifications within the time specified, well above the national rate. In the same period the outcomes of level 2 learners had improved to a point just above the national rate.
- Learners enjoy their learning, gain in confidence and develop good knowledge of health and social care practice. They successfully improve their workplace skills and some have won promotion to managerial posts. Learners have a good understanding of their own and others' safety and security at work. Learners report they feel safe at work.
- Teaching and training are good, both in groups and individually. Tutors use a wide range of teaching methods to meet each learner's needs. Learn to Care produces good quality workbooks and study guides which are well used and valued by the learners.
- Assessment practice is satisfactory overall, but some assessors use a limited range of assessment methods.
- The provision meets the needs and interests of learners and employers well. Staff have a sufficient range of vocational experience to support the NVQ in a range of different care settings and are well qualified. Care managers are aware of learners' progress and achievements and facilitate teaching and assessment sessions at their workplaces.
- Learn to Care's guidance and support for learning are good. There is a strong focus on identifying and supporting those with poor literacy skills, but spelling and grammar in portfolios is inaccurate at times. All staff are qualified to level 2 in literacy.

- Business planning, monitoring and performance review actively raise standards and achieve some challenging targets. Thorough evaluation and analysis of the effectiveness of training and learning at the point of delivery also lead to demonstrable improvements, although the two aspects are not sufficiently integrated.
- Learn to Care is a supportive and caring organisation. The professional development of staff is a high priority and all staff are appropriately qualified.
- Learn to Care's safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory. The promotion and practice of equality and diversity are good. Learners demonstrate a thoughtful and considered approach to both aspects in their workplaces and see each as intrinsic to good working practice. There are no significant differences in the success rates of any groups.
- Self-assessment is satisfactory. The self-assessment report is comprehensive and while broadly accurate is too descriptive. A wide range of areas for improvement are included in an accompanying quality improvement plan but action planning is not always sufficiently specific or timebound.

What does Learn to Care need to do to improve further?

- Meet learners' needs better by reviewing and reducing the amount of written work they are set and extending the range of assessment methods used to gather evidence for the NVQ.
- Promote the use of more open questioning to assess, confirm and record learners' understanding of the information they are given during induction.
- Promote the development of all learners' literacy skills in order to improve spelling and grammar in portfolios.
- Streamline the approaches for business planning and improvement at the point of delivery to develop a more integrated approach to quality improvement, incorporating self-assessment and quality improvement planning.
- Reduce the size and detail of the self-assessment report, focusing on brevity and evaluative judgements. Link the report more closely to well-targeted quality improvement planning.
- Improve the collection and analysis of numerical data to identify starting points for improvement actions and for measuring any consequent progress in achieving specific incremental or overall targets.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the opportunity to finish the NVQ and the supportive tutors
- learning something new every day
- approachable and friendly trainers who listen to what they have to say and who are at the end of a phone if needed for help and advice
- frequent visits which motivate learners to complete written work
- the quality and content of the workbooks
- training together as a group.

What learners would like to see improved:

- reducing the amount of paperwork
- more teaching time
- allotting extra time for the bigger NVQ units
- audio recording some of the evidence.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the high standards of training and communication
- Learn to Care's helpful staff
- training which is 'person-centred'.

What employers would like to see improved:

- Nothing reported.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 2

13. Learn to Care has reviewed and overhauled its management systems, its approach to training and support and successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection, particularly the extent to which it identifies and supports learners' needs, deploys resources and the effectiveness of its quality improvement arrangements. Its arrangements for monitoring the subcontractor are thorough and effective.
14. Overall outcomes for learners were high at the previous inspection and have since further improved. At that time only a third of learners achieved their qualification in the specified timescale. By contrast, learners now achieve their qualification within the specified period at well above, or close to, the national rate.
15. The arrangements and systems for quality improvement have much improved since the last inspection. Learn to Care has very good arrangements for collecting, analysing and responding to learners' and employers' views. Qualitative data are now used well to assess and evaluate what works well and what does not, leading to prompt and appropriate improvement actions. Business planning, monitoring and reviews of quality at strategic level and the evaluation of the quality of provision at the points of delivery each promote improvement, but the two aspects are not sufficiently integrated.
16. The quality of self-assessment remains satisfactory, as does quality improvement action planning. While largely accurate, the former is not sufficiently evaluative nor the latter sufficiently specific, measurable or time-bound in its target setting.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

17. Outcomes for learners have steadily improved over time. In 2008/09 the timely success rate for level 3 learners was very high at 93%, well above the national rate. In the same period, timely success rates for learners at level 2 had improved to a point just above the national rate. Around 84% of the 2009/10 cohort of level 2 learners have now finished their qualification in the specified timescale, well above the national rate.
18. Learners enjoy their learning, make good progress towards completion of their award and develop good knowledge of health and social care practice. The quality of learners' work in their portfolios is satisfactory and meets the standards set by the awarding body.

19. Learners successfully improve their workplace skills. Achievement of the qualification increases learners' employment prospects and promotion opportunities. Learners are given more responsibilities at work and some have won promotion to managerial posts.
20. Learners gain in confidence, for example in how to work with clients whose behaviour is challenging. Some care managers described learners' prompt actions when dealing with emergencies, such as a client who collapsed and needed urgent treatment. A few learners have learnt Makaton sign language to further improve communication with their clients.
21. Learners have a good understanding of their own and others' safety and security at work. The promotion of safety and security is good. Learners report they feel safe at work with no incidents of harassment or bullying. They feel well prepared to report any incidents.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

22. Group teaching is good. Individual training sessions in the smaller care settings or for learners who prefer not to attend group sessions are also good. Tutors use a wide range of teaching methods to meet each learner's needs. Learn to Care produces good quality workbooks and study guides which are well used and valued by learners.
23. Questioning during induction does not always check learners' understanding of the material covered. Closed questions are sometimes used, missing opportunities to confirm that learners fully understand the requirements of their training.
24. A small number of learners use e-assessment and e-portfolios, but the number is growing. The e-portfolios are used well; learners benefit from a wide range of assessment methods and some make very rapid progress. For example, one learner has only been on the programme for a month but has already completed 50% of the NVQ at level 3.
25. Assessment practice is satisfactory. All assessors are vocationally experienced, appropriately qualified and given sufficient flexibility to visit learners as frequently as needed. However, some assessors use a limited range of assessment methods. For example, learners complete much written work including activities which occur frequently but there is insufficient use of observation.
26. The range of provision meets the needs and interests of learners and employers well. Staff have a spread of vocational experience to support the NVQ in a range of different care settings, providing learners with good opportunities to take additional units relevant to the setting in which they work.

27. The partnership and working arrangements between Learn to Care's managers, tutors, assessors and care managers are good. Care managers understand the requirements of the NVQ, are supportive of learners and facilitate teaching and assessment sessions at their workplaces. They are aware of learners' progress and achievements.
28. Learn to Care's guidance and support for learning are good, with a very effective focus on identifying and supporting individual learning needs. All learners have initial assessments of their literacy and numeracy skills and preferred learning styles. Learners are aware of the results and, where needed, effective individual literacy support is available to them from a dedicated specialist from Learn to Care. All staff are qualified to level 2 in literacy.

Leadership and management

Grade 2

29. Business planning, monitoring and performance review at strategic level actively raise standards and there has been a good focus on improving success rates over time. The business plan is a regularly updated record of progress towards achieving challenging targets. Some of these targets are not sufficiently specific or timebound. Thorough evaluation and analysis of the effectiveness of teaching, training and learning at the point of delivery also lead to demonstrable improvements. However, the strategic-level business planning and quality improvement arrangements at the point of delivery are not sufficiently integrated.
30. Qualitative data are used well by managers to identify positive and negative trends and to act accordingly, but quantitative data are not as well used to identify starting points or progress over time. Monthly monitoring arrangements for the subcontractor are rigorous.
31. Learn to Care is a supportive and caring organisation which pays very good attention to supporting all staff and learners to improve their skills. Staff's professional development is a high priority and all staff are appropriately qualified.
32. Staffing levels and resources to support learners are good. Learn to Care ensures that assessors' case loads are fair and that the ratio of assessors to learners is sufficient to support group and individual learning.
33. Governance is good. The board actively sets and reviews targets for improvement and closely monitors performance over time. Communications to and from board level are open and effective, underpinned by a comprehensive meetings framework which enables all staff to understand priorities and to be involved in decision making and quality improvement.
34. Safeguarding is satisfactory. Learn to Care is meeting its statutory obligations and has given safeguarding a high priority in the past year. The arrangements

for Criminal Records Bureau checking and review conform to government requirements. All staff have undergone appropriate training. Staff and learners have a good understanding of safety and security and learners state that they feel safe. The designated person for safeguarding has not undergone specialist training but is scheduled to attend a relevant training course in the autumn of 2010. Learn to Care has not yet developed close links with local safeguarding networks.

35. The promotion and practice of equality and diversity are good. All appropriate policies and procedures are in place and reflect current legislation. Staff have received relevant and up-to-date training and their knowledge is sound. Good attention is paid to promoting and explaining aspects of equality and diversity to learners at induction and during reviews. Learners have a good understanding of equality and diversity. They demonstrate a thoughtful and considered approach to both aspects in their workplaces and see each as intrinsic to good working practice. The strategies used by assessors and trainers to overcome individual learners' barriers to success are usually successful in supporting subsequent achievement. Any differences in achievement between different groups of learners' performance have been analysed, but there are no significant differences in the success rates of any groups. Learn to Care successfully targets areas of economic and social deprivation in East Kent to recruit its employers and learners.
36. Particularly good use is made of learners' and employers' views to identify improvement actions. The arrangements to collect such views at the end of courses or from learners who leave early are thorough. The questionnaires are well structured, and pose perceptive questions. Good data analysis provides clear and quick identification of trends or specific aspects for improvement.
37. Self-assessment is satisfactory. The self-assessment report is detailed and comprehensive, but in many parts it is overly descriptive and is not the succinct quality improvement system that Learn to Care hoped to create. While the report clearly identifies most of the strengths of the provision and grading is in line with that of inspectors', the areas for improvement are not as prominent. A wider range of areas for improvement are included in an accompanying quality improvement plan (QIP) but action planning is often not sufficiently specific or timebound. Each assessor receives up to four observations each year. Learn to Care recently produced clear guidance on the grading and judgements made in observations but this guidance has not yet improved practice.
38. Learn to Care provides good value for money. Learners progress well, develop skills and knowledge and attain their learning goals. Resources are deployed effectively.

Information about the inspection

39. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's operations manager as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, the previous inspection report, the report from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
40. Inspectors observed training, assessment sessions and progress reviews. They used group and individual interviews with learners and employers, telephone calls and emails. They looked at questionnaires that learners and employers had recently completed on behalf of the provider, the analysis of answers and the consequent actions.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Learn to Care

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	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners		
Full-time learners	169	169
Part-time learners		
Overall effectiveness	2	2
Capacity to improve	2	
Outcomes for learners	2	2
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2	
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2	
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?*	-	
How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*	-	
Quality of provision	2	2
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?	2	
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2	
Leadership and management	2	2
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?*	2	
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	3	
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?	2	
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?	2	

*where applicable to the type of provision

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