

Care Training Solutions Ltd

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 58567

Name of lead inspector: Pauline Hawkesford HMI

Last day of inspection: 13 August 2010

Type of provider: Independent learning provider

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Information about the provider

1. Care Training Solutions (CTS) was established in September 2003. It is a City and Guilds accredited assessment centre with headquarters in Kidlington, Oxfordshire. It delivers a variety of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs), operational training, continuing professional development and management skills throughout the health and social care sector in Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. Since 2008 it has had contracts with the Learning and Skills Council, now the Skills Funding Agency, for 20 apprenticeships in health and social care. This is the only provision in scope for this inspection and represents 3% of the work of CTS. The company is also subcontracted by two county councils to provide Train to Gain in health and social care for just over 200 learners. This accounts for 54% of CTS' work.

2. CTS has two directors, an administrative assistant, a business development office manager, and nine assessors, three of whom are freelance.

3. The provider provides training on behalf of the following providers:
 - Buckinghamshire County Council
 - Oxfordshire County Council.

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2009/10
Employer provision: Apprenticeships	27 apprentices

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	3
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	3
Subject Areas	Grade
Health and Social Care	2

Overall effectiveness

4. The overall effectiveness of CTS is good. Learners enjoy learning and make good progress. They achieve satisfactory or better results in their apprenticeships and many are given extra responsibilities at work, or promotion. Attendance is good.
5. Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Learning is well planned, and all aspects are designed to be relevant to learners' employment. Activities engage learners so that they find learning enjoyable and memorable. Assessment is accurate, and helps learners understand how they can improve their work. CTS uses a wide range of partners from other care organisations, education providers, employers and charities to ensure that learners benefit from up-to-date knowledge of the care sector. Advice, guidance and support are particularly effective in helping learners stay on programme and progress.
6. Leadership and management are good. Directors involve staff closely in decisions and use their experience, and that of partners, to share good practice. Although quality assurance strategies are not formal, the company has regular meetings at which it evaluates provision and promptly introduces identified changes. This results in significant improvements to a range of activities which impact on learners, such as teaching and learning, target setting and reviews. CTS has identified it needs to improve the documentation used for the

observation of teaching and learning, which currently is focused too much on teaching.

7. Safeguarding arrangements are good. Equality and diversity are satisfactory. Learners have a good understanding of what discrimination is, and how to avoid it, but this is not regularly reinforced at reviews.

Main findings

- Outcomes for learners are satisfactory. Most in-year success rates match national rates, although the in-year timely success rates for learners aged 16 to 18 are significantly higher than the national rate.
- Learners develop good professional and employment skills. They are well informed about the range of progression opportunities within caring professions.
- Teaching and learning are good. It is planned and delivered well. It encourages learners to develop independent learning and problem solving skills, and is designed to provide learning which is enjoyable and memorable. Key skill and technical certificate training relates closely to learners' employment interests.
- Good assessment helps learners understand how assessment decisions have been reached, what they need to do to improve, and how they can make improvements to their work.
- The needs of learners are met well. Assessors and teachers have a wide experience of working in caring professions and are well qualified. This increases the range of NVQ options learners can take and supports the company's strong focus on meeting the needs of individual learners.
- CTS' good partnerships with employers, local care organisations, charities and other education providers enable learners to benefit from the good practice which is shared. In addition, CTS staff regularly share good practice, and evaluate their own performance.
- Learners are given particularly good support both for their learning and personal issues. Teachers' and assessors' experience of social work gives them empathy with their learners. They give realistic and knowledgeable advice and guidance on progression routes.
- Leadership and management are good. The directors have a clear strategic vision that is focused on improving provision for learners and employers, so that it meets the specific needs of the care sector.
- Particularly effective strategies raise the aspirations of learners. Several learners who did not engage with learning previously have progressed successfully through the course and to further learning or promoted posts.
- Regular team meetings, focused on evaluating provision and evaluations of teaching sessions, have brought about significant improvements to provision that have impacted on learners' progress and success. However, CTS recognises that quality assurance activities are not sufficiently formal.

- Equality and diversity are satisfactory. Learning reviews are not monitored sufficiently to ensure that learners' understanding of the wider aspects of equality and diversity are regularly reinforced. However, CTS promotes the understanding of cultural differences so that learners can support those in their care more effectively.
- Arrangements for the observation of teaching and learning are not focused sufficiently on learning. However, managers are aware of this and working towards developing improved observation practices.

What does Care Training Solutions Ltd need to do to improve further?

- Further develop robust monitoring processes to ensure that equality and diversity are reinforced at reviews.
- Continue to develop teaching and learning observation strategies so that they focus on learning as well as teaching.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the relevance of the programme
- the employment-based environment
- the well planned learning
- the friendliness of the staff.

What learners would like to see improved:

- the opportunity to continue to an advanced apprenticeship at CTS.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the company's reliability
- the quality
- the good communication and responsiveness to our needs.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement Grade 2

8. CTS has a good capacity to improve. Five learners left the programme without achieving during the year 2008/09, the majority after a short time. Following planned changes to delivery, no learners have left without achieving in the current year. Monitoring of planned end dates has resulted in significant improvements to timely success rates. The directors' vision for responsive social care training raises the aspirations of all their learners. The self-assessment report is not yet fully developed, but continuous evaluation of teaching, learning, reviews and target setting has led to demonstrable improvements in these areas. Effective quality improvement, through regular meetings and sharing of practice, is well developed. All staff are involved with improving quality, and the democratic structure of the company is able to react quickly to implement improvements.

Outcomes for learners Grade 3

9. Outcomes for learners are satisfactory. 2009/10 is the first year in which learners are expected to complete their frameworks. At the time of inspection timely success rates for learners aged 16 to 18 are high, at 73%. Overall success rates for all learners are around the national average.
10. Learners make good progress from their starting points. Of the eight learners aged 16 to 18 who have achieved the framework four had either been excluded from school or left with very low grades. One of these has progressed to higher education. Two others are still on programme and making good progress. Three of the seven learners aged 19 or over had no qualifications and have now achieved, and one is on programme and making good progress. All learners who completed the programme achieved the full framework, including key skills in literacy and numeracy.
11. The standard of learners' work and employment skills is good. Learners demonstrate their understanding of the importance of punctuality, reliability and working in a team. They gain confidence, and take on greater responsibilities. For example, some plan group activities for those they care for, and write their letters. Others have been promoted to being key workers and supervisors. Importantly, the learners enjoy their work and their apprenticeship. CTS promotes progression opportunities well throughout the programme.
12. Learners say they feel safe. They use safe working practices and have a very good understanding of health and safety. Attendance is good.

The quality of provision Grade 2

13. The quality of provision is good. Teaching, coaching, learning and assessment are good. Teachers and assessors reinforce professional practice extremely well

and learners develop good skills. They make good progress in lessons. Teaching is well planned to be relevant to their employment and links technical certificates and key skills to their NVQ. Learners understand the relevance of these aspects of their training and enjoy putting the theory into practice. For example, their research for application of number provides useful information on dietary preferences, use of aids and staffing levels for personal care in the homes where they work. They benefit from role playing in communication lessons because it increases their confidence in the workplace. The good teaching allows learners to work confidently and independently. They use computers well to research and record their work, importing appropriate images, graphs and charts. Learning is checked well, and careful questioning supports learners to solve problems for themselves.

14. Assessors are well qualified in a wide range of health and social care professions which enables learners to choose those NVQ units that best reflect their care work. Assessors feedback promptly and thoroughly to learners on the quality of their written evidence to explain how they made the assessment decision and how learners can improve. They make good use of prior learning and additional courses provided by employers by confirming learners' understanding of the topic and using this to reduce the amount of evidence learners need to provide. Resources for teaching are good with high quality workbooks which inform and challenge learners.
15. CTS meets the needs and interests of its learners well. It signposts learners to other opportunities to continue their learning at higher levels, and in different areas of care work. Coaching and learning are delivered to small groups and individually in the workplace if required. Training and assessment are sufficiently flexible to meet learners' and employers' needs. Learners are proud of their achievements and benefit from key skills in their daily lives.
16. Relationships with employers are good and well established. CTS ensures employers understand fully the requirements of the apprenticeship programme. Employers are very involved in training and in learners' progress reviews. They facilitate assessment and attendance at teaching sessions.
17. Advice, guidance and support are good. Assessors empathise well with learners and offer sensitive and well-informed guidance and support for their learning, social and pastoral needs. Learners have realistic aspirations to progress at work and to higher qualifications. Staff provide them with thorough and effective advice and guidance about how best to achieve their career goals. CTS promotes inclusion very well. Learners who were excluded from school are now fully engaged in learning and aim to progress further.

Leadership and management

Grade 2

18. Leadership and management are good. The directors' extensive knowledge of social care leads to their clear vision of promoting high quality training that meets learners' and employers' needs. The directors seek and value the

contributions of assessors and tutors to develop the programme. They provide numerous opportunities to share good practice between their own staff and with other organisations. This is well communicated through meeting minutes and the resulting actions benefit learners and their employers.

19. CTS raises expectations and aspirations successfully. Around half of all achievers have either been excluded from school, or left with no qualifications or very low grades. Assessors contributed to the development of a robust process for monitoring target completion rates since when completions have increased significantly. CTS develops its staff well. All teachers and assessors, including freelance assessors, have completed the 'Preparing to teach in the lifelong learning sector' (PTLLS) qualification, and are members of the Institute for Learning. Some, including one of the directors, are now in the second year of the post graduate certificate in education (PGCE). Plentiful and appropriate continuous professional development is well attended. Those who miss the training can access the materials independently.
20. Arrangements for safeguarding are good. CTS is fully compliant with safeguarding requirements and has a single central register for all staff who are in contact with learners. Its safeguarding policies and procedures are designed to match those of the two county councils with whom it works. In addition, role plays of safeguarding situations make learning memorable for learners. Staff receive regular training.
21. Equality and diversity are promoted satisfactorily. CTS has appropriate and up-to-date policies and practices. The company is closely involved with the development of care ambassadors who attend induction and give careers information to mixed groups in schools. CTS has information about learners from different groups, but numbers are too small to identify any trends in success rates. Tutors help learners from other cultures to understand the culture of those for whom they are caring. For example, during sessions on helping people to dress, the importance of vests to elderly people is explained, as are dietary expectations, such as roast dinners. One assessor has an English for speakers of other languages qualification and the company uses a range of assessment methods, including audio recordings, observation and discussion. Voice recognition software supports learners for whom English is not their first language. Wider aspects of equality and diversity are not reinforced sufficiently at reviews.
22. CTS engages users well. Staff are consulted frequently and involved in change. It listens and acts on employers' feedback on provision and areas for improvement. CTS has very strong links with a range of local and national care agencies and organisations. A significant link is with the PGCE group, which gives the teaching staff many new approaches to teaching and learning. This impacts on learner engagement in lessons.
23. The self-assessment reporting process is very new to CTS and the draft report does not make judgements against all aspects of the Common Inspection

Framework. However, it uses some data to evaluate provision well and makes clear, and mostly accurate, judgements. All staff were involved in the draft report. The views of learners and employers are gathered and analysed. Apart from the self-assessment process, CTS has numerous ways of assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of provision, including reflective writing by learners, and regular evaluation of lessons by teachers. This thoughtfulness about its own business has led to improvements in target setting, reviews, questionnaires and teaching and learning. CTS identifies that strategies for the observation of teaching and learning are not fully developed. Currently they focus too heavily on teaching.

24. Value for money is good. Learners achieve at national rates and make good progress. Resources are used well, with appropriate caseloads for assessors and training that is focused on improving provision for learners. Assessors drive learners to their training at the centre. This reduces transport costs and makes best use of central resources.

Information about the inspection

25. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one additional inspector, assisted by one of the provider's directors, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and data on learners and their achievement. This is the provider's first inspection.
26. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed on behalf of the provider. They also observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from the subject area the provider offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)
Care Training Solutions Ltd

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	27	27
Part-time learners		
Overall effectiveness	2	2
Capacity to improve	2	
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?*	n/a	
How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*	n/a	
Quality of provision	2	2
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2	
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?*	n/a	
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?	3	
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?	2	
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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