

# NTQUK Limited

## Focused monitoring visit report

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## FOCUSED MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

### Context and focus of visit

NTQUK Limited (formerly NVQUK Limited) is a privately owned national training company with a head office in Bracknell. NTQUK provides training in health and social care for learners working in the care sector. NTQUK contracts with the Skills Funding Agency for Train to Gain, apprenticeship and advanced apprenticeship training. Learners are employed with over 50 organisations including public, very large care home companies and small private concerns. Over the last two years, learner numbers have increased significantly from approximately 500 to over 1,400. Also, apprenticeship training has increased to around 80% of government-funded training, as Train to Gain numbers have dwindled.

NTQUK was inspected in September 2009. At that time the overall effectiveness, capacity to improve, quality of provision, leadership and management, and safeguarding were judged to be good. Health and social care was also good. Outcomes for learners and equality and diversity were satisfactory, and the report noted that learners' progress to complete the qualifications within the expected timescale was low. This report focuses on the themes explored in the visit.

### Themes

#### Self-assessment and improvement planning

**What progress has been made in self-assessment, quality improvement and the more effective use of data?**

**Significant progress**

At the last inspection, self-assessment was judged to improve the quality of provision effectively and led to clear drafting and implementation of a quality improvement plan. NTQUK had a well shared vision for improving and developing the company. Overall achievement targets were appropriately challenging. However, the use of data to guide improvement planning and target setting was insufficiently developed.

Self-assessment and quality improvement remain good. The latest quality improvement plan includes good actions to use data and develop meaningful reports on training and learners' progress. NTQUK has established a good range of management reports that give very clear visibility of learners' progress and the difference across comparative groups. Regional managers now have weekly reports showing learner progress for each assessor and there is a good monthly report listing apprentices nearing the end of their training, with associated targets. Managers take strong action to ensure any learner at risk of not completing in time is identified and that outstanding elements of the apprenticeship are completed.

## Outcomes for learners

### **What progress has been made in improving learners' outcomes since the last inspection?**

**Reasonable progress**

Since the last inspection, where outcomes were judged to be satisfactory, Train to Gain learners' outcomes have remained broadly steady, but the number of these learners has decreased substantially. At the same time, the number of apprentices has started to grow. Apprentices' outcomes, which have fluctuated over the last few years, have improved substantially in the current year and are well ahead of the industry's average success rate. There are no significant differences in achievement between different groups of learners, apart from the under performance of the small number of learners with learning difficulties.

NTQUK has substantially restructured its learning programmes. As well as improving learners' chances of achieving their qualification, this has led to learners enjoying and valuing their qualifications more. Learners who are now following advanced apprenticeships, and who previously achieved a level 2 Train to Gain qualification, say that they are learning far more in the current programme, rather than just being awarded a qualification for doing what they did in their everyday work.

### **What progress has been made in ensuring apprentices complete within expected timescales?**

**Significant progress**

At the last inspection, apprentices' progress was slow. New systems for monitoring learners' progress now make it easier for NTQUK to intervene early when a learner's progress slows for whatever reason. Managers review assessors' reports on individual learners regularly and systems to flag when learners are approaching their planned end date for their qualification mean extra visits are planned to make sure learners complete on time whenever possible.

NTQUK has redesigned its programme to increase learners' chances of success. The programme is now more structured and key skills training and assessment take place early on instead of at the end. NTQUK has produced standardised training materials, and made those that support key skills training more relevant to care work, to make more sense to learners. Initial assessment is more structured and rigorous, partly because of the more stringent job role requirements of the new qualification credit framework (QCF) award.

In the current year, the proportion of those apprentices who have completed their programme on time has increased by 20 percentage points from the previous year, and is now ahead of the average performance by all providers in health and social care.

## Quality of provision

**What progress has been made since the last inspection in improving workplace supervisors' involvement in monitoring learners' progress?**

**Significant progress**

At the last inspection, learners had a good understanding of the progress they made, although many work supervisors were not sufficiently involved in monitoring learners' progress. Assessment is now very frequent, well organised and structured. Assessors visit learners in the workplace regularly. An online recording system gives a good visual display of learners' progress and this is shared with the employer at the end of every visit. The company now sends employers a monthly report showing the progress of each of their learners. NTQUK has worked with larger employers and care home managers to ensure they have a better understanding of the apprenticeship and new QCF award. The new qualification now links the mandatory training in care homes to the apprenticeship.

**What progress has been made in effectively using initial assessment for literacy and numeracy in planning individual learning?**

**Significant progress**

At the last inspection, NTQUK insufficiently used the results of initial assessment in literacy and numeracy. As part of the subsequent overall review of its programmes, NTQUK improved the depth and breadth of this initial assessment and now takes more note of the results when planning individual learning.

The shift to put more adult learners on apprenticeships, rather than Train to Gain, led NTQUK to devise better ways to develop adult learners' levels of literacy and numeracy. This has led to a greater emphasis on key skills at the beginning of training programmes. Learners now have to be working at level 1 in communications and numeracy before they can start their apprenticeships. Specialist trainers use new materials, written by NTQUK, to develop learners' key skills before they can sign up for the apprenticeship itself. If learners have a much lower level of key skills at initial assessment, trainers now direct them towards other providers for Skills for Life support before accepting them onto the apprenticeship programme.

Learners who previously lacked confidence in their ability to succeed in literacy and numeracy now enjoy learning through projects which are relevant to their work, and develop confidence as well as competence.

## Leadership and management

**What progress has been made in improving the challenge and understanding in questions asked about equality and diversity in progress reviews?**

**Significant progress**

At the last inspection, arrangements for promoting equality and diversity were satisfactory. However, questions asked at progress reviews were insufficiently challenging and did not adequately test learners' knowledge of current law and company policies and procedures.

NTQUK has new online training for assessors in safeguarding and a course is planned for equality, diversity and inclusion. Equality and diversity feature in the continuous professional development plan for all assessors. The requirements for the care industry focus on concerns for equality and safety. Learners receive detailed training on the values of equality and diversity as part of their qualification and care home training. The company has established a comprehensive set of questions on health and safety and equality and diversity to be used at each assessment and review visit to learners. Assessors now ask learners a question each time and discuss the answer. This is structured, well organised and recorded in the online assessment plan. Learners also benefit from the equality and diversity training provided by employers in the care homes. As part of the new QCF, NTQUK now gives each learner a text book which includes a chapter on equality and diversity, and a CD with links to online equality and diversity training.

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