

# Humber Learning Consortium

## Inspection report

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**Unique reference number:** 58700

**Name of lead inspector:** Tim Gardner HMI

**Last day of inspection:** 18 May 2012

**Type of provider:** Independent learning provider

**Address:** 63-71 Anlaby Road  
Hull  
HU3 2LL

**Telephone number:** 01482 327438

## Information about the provider

1. Humber Learning Consortium (HLC) is a registered charity which acts as a hub organisation providing leadership and management services and access to a range of funding streams for their voluntary and community sector (VCS) partners. By gaining access to funding from the Skills Funding Agency, European Social Funding, Big Lottery and Community Grants, HLC commissions provision of relevant programmes from VCS organisations and a smaller number of other providers, who are better placed to engage with prioritised communities from the most deprived areas around Hull, East Riding of Yorkshire, Doncaster, North and North East Lincolnshire. All of HLC's current business activity consists of managing this programme.
2. This is HLC's first inspection. It uses its partners to promote and develop social cohesion, particularly in areas identified as having high levels of both social and economic deprivation, with individuals and communities who are disengaged from learning. Hull and the surrounding area scores highly on all indices of multiple deprivation and is recognised as one of the most socially and economically deprived areas in the UK.
3. At the time of the inspection, 268 learners were attending courses at HLC. Of these, 181 were attending learner responsive programmes aimed at 16- to 18-year-olds not in education, employment or training and 87 were attending courses for personal and social development as part of the adult safeguarded learning programmes.
4. HLC provides training on behalf of the following provider:
  - Your Consortium, North Yorkshire
5. The following organisations provide training on behalf of HLC:
  - Artlink
  - Avant
  - Bentley Training Centre (Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council)
  - Catch 22
  - CERT Ltd
  - Children & Family Action
  - Christchurch
  - Community Linx
  - Construction Works
  - Crosby Employment Bureau
  - Doncaster Ethnic Minority Regeneration Partnership
  - East Riding Adult Education Service

- East Riding Training Services
- Engage Training
- Foresight
- GLAD Training
- Goodwin Development Trust
- Higher Rhythm
- Hull Training
- HYA Training
- Identities
- IGEN
- Llite
- MIND (Hull & East Yorkshire)
- NACRO
- Oracle
- Platform 51
- Preston Road Women’s Centre
- Prince’s Trust
- Probe
- YMCA Training

<b>Type of provision</b>	<b>Number of enrolled learners in 2010/11</b>
<p><b>Provision for young learners:</b></p> <p>Foundations for learning and life</p>	<p>74 part-time learners</p>
<p><b>Adult and community learning</b></p>	<p>1,424 learners</p>

## Summary report

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of provision</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>
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<b>Capacity to improve</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>
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	<b>Grade</b>
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	3
Equality and diversity	2

<b>Subject Areas</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Preparation for life and work	2

## Overall effectiveness

6. HLC delivers a good quality range of programmes specifically targeted to contribute to the development of social cohesion in the hard to reach communities in the Yorkshire and Humber region. HLC works very effectively with a range of partners in the voluntary sector to engage with learners with a wide spectrum of identified learning needs. Once they begin to study, they make good progress towards achieving their planned learning goals. Although the quality of teaching varies across the partners, overall, it is good. HLC ensures a good range of provision in order to attract all of the priority groups identified. HLC work very well with their partners who provide learners with good care, guidance and support.
  
7. HLC provides good leadership and management to its partners and this is successful in developing partners' skills and processes as well as ensuring that the learners' experience is positive.

## Main findings

- Many learners progress into mainstream destinations such as employment and education. They make good progress in their studies, often from very low starting points. Retention is good, despite many learners having multiple barriers to learning. Standards of work are at least satisfactory; however, not all

learners are sufficiently challenged by their targets or have access to relevant qualifications.

- Learners across the provision improve their economic and social well-being well through learning and development. Learners have a good awareness of safe working practices and of safeguarding issues. Learners feel safe and welcome. They are able to make informed choices about their own health and well-being satisfactorily and their contribution to the community is good.
- Teaching and learning are good overall. The better lessons are lively and well planned in order to interest and motivate learners. Learners work collaboratively and enjoy learning. Teachers use an effective range of strategies to encourage learners in danger of becoming disengaged. However, initial assessment and target-setting are sometimes generic and lack meaning affecting the accurate measurement of learners' progress towards their goals.
- The range of provision meets the needs of learners well. HLC offers a good range of courses at different levels and in different venues enabling learners to improve their knowledge and skills significantly. They locate their provision in accessible community venues. Qualifications from entry to advanced level help learners progress into further education, increase their employability and in some cases gain employment.
- Partnership work is good. HLC works productively with a wide range of carefully selected partners to promote social inclusion. Through good partnership arrangements, HLC provides a good match between provision and the specific needs of communities and individuals. Partner organisations include those that target specific groups such as women, disabled people or young people not in education, employment or training.
- Support and guidance for learners are good. Learners participate in guidance sessions that include taster visits to other training providers. In some partnership organisations support continues for learners who are unable to find placements. Effective individual support enables learners with irregular learning patterns to achieve their learning goals. However, some centres do not always actively share information with tutors on vulnerable learners.
- HLC maintains a strong focus on its core vision and mission to achieve its charitable goals. Leadership and management are strong and promote good ambition and high expectations throughout the organisation to achieve their key strategic priorities. Actions managers have taken to relocate and restructure the consortium have been very effective in streamlining the organisation. The new offices promote improved communications and involvement of staff in management issues.
- Trustees provide a highly effective 'sounding board' to HLC in supporting strategic goals and reviewing new opportunities for the organisation. Knowledgeable trustees contribute very well to a range of corporate activities such as staff planning days and team meetings. They engage with staff in both a formal and informal way. Financial and performance oversight is rigorous. HLC's reports to trustees are detailed and they provide an accurate review of performance.

- HLC effectively promotes safeguarding to learners. HLC's safeguarding policy and procedures ensure all HLC staff are vetted and trained in safeguarding awareness. HLC identifies designated officers and a trustee to implement policies and take required actions. However, not all providers fully apply all aspects of the procedures to the same degree of consistency.
- The promotion of equality and diversity to learners is good. HLC targets provision at communities and groups from areas of the highest deprivation to achieve its strategic objectives regarding social cohesion and to demonstrate public benefit from the programmes. They produce a good range of accessible resources for partners. Partners use these well to promote learning about equality and diversity.
- Engagement with users and stakeholders overall is good. Excellent relationships exist between HLC and its partners and external stakeholders, however, the relationships with employers are less well developed. Learners give feedback to partners who then share their views at a range of activities and meetings with HLC formally and informally. Partners identify how HLC works with them in both a supportive and developmental way to improve their systems and processes.
- HLC has detailed and effective quality systems which make good use of the inspection framework to monitor key aspects of programmes with the partners. Managers monitor the quality of provision and audit compliance with contract and quality requirements through regular and frequent contact with providers. Managers use the observation processes to identify good practice and individual tutors' development needs.
- HLC's use of its resources to secure value for money is good. HLC manages its contracts with partners very effectively to ensure that they provide what is expected. The performance monitoring of partner providers works well and both supports and promotes improvements. Learners benefit from this process and outcomes for learners are good. Financial management is good and HLC ensures it maintains sufficient reserves to protect learners on programme.

### **What does HLC need to do to improve further?**

- Ensure that learners are challenged appropriately by setting targets that although still achievable, will promote further progress and challenge in achieving relevant qualifications, particularly for younger learners.
- Take actions to ensure that initial assessment, individual learning plans and reviews identify and record in sufficient detail learners' personalised learning targets and monitoring of progress so that learners understand the skills they have developed, what they need to do to progress and are fully aware of their achievements.
- Ensure consistency of access to information for tutors across the partnership on the special support requirements of their learners so they are more able to plan, prepare and respond to individual learning needs.
- Ensure that HLC applies a consistent approach to the review and implementation of all aspects of the safeguarding procedures across all providers.

## **Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors**

### **What learners like:**

- being treated with respect as an adult
- the good courses and skills to learn
- the friendly, helpful understanding staff
- the help with personal issues
- the enjoyable practical sessions
- the well-organised, calm and friendly atmosphere and good resources.

### **What learners would like to see improved:**

- the amount of paperwork to fill in at the start of the programme
- the time spent in classes
- the standard of some rooms used for classes.

## **Summary of the views of stakeholders as confirmed by inspectors**

### **What employers like:**

- the way HLC provides support and guidance and how this impacts on their other activities
- the ease of access to HLC staff at all levels in the organisation
- how HLC focuses on improving performance
- the quick and friendly response from the administration team to queries and questions.

### **What stakeholders would like to see improved:**

- none recorded.

## Main inspection report

### Capacity to make and sustain improvement

**Grade 2**

8. HLC has demonstrated it has the capacity to make and sustain good improvements. In the short period of time it has been providing funded learning programmes, HLC has taken effective actions to improve the experience for learners. The consortium works very effectively with its partners to develop them to improve their own systems, processes and capabilities. Managers make good use of a range of quality checks and compliance audits to ensure that partners provide what is expected and that the learners' experience is central to all that they do. Observation of practice is constructive for the tutors and HLC organises and provides a wide range of training and staff development activities for their own and partners' staff.
9. Self-assessment is rigorous, evaluative and fully inclusive of all HLC staff and the partners. It is largely accurate and identifies many of the strengths seen by inspectors. A detailed quality improvement plan identifies key areas for further development.

### Outcomes for learners

**Grade 2**

10. Sixteen to eighteen-year-old learners' progression to positive destinations such as employment and further education is good. They make good progress in their studies. Many have multiple barriers to learning and around three quarters come from areas of high deprivation. Retention of both the young adults and community learners is high. Many community learners also progress to positive destinations such as further education and employment. A significant number are developing skills while working as volunteers across the community. Standards of work are at least satisfactory; however, not all learners are sufficiently challenged by the level of work or their individual targets. Not all have access to qualifications.
11. HLC monitors data to evaluate the performance of different groups and narrow achievement gaps. It has arranged several consultancies for the partners to raise their awareness of this issue. As a result, actions have been taken to improve provision for learners from different vulnerable groups. For example, several providers are now giving extra reviews and individual support for learners and some have employed youth workers to give specialised support. Retention is improving.
12. Learners feel very safe and apply safe working practices well. Most understand safeguarding issues well, displaying a good understanding of internet and social network site safety. They have a good understanding of health and safety, and take responsibility for their own and others' safety. HLC places a high priority on the health and safety of its learners.



13. Learners have a reasonable knowledge of health and well-being. Younger learners enjoy regular sexual-health sessions built into their programmes. They benefit from good learning mentors and guidance staff who help with a wide range of issues including mental health problems, domestic violence and pregnancy.
14. Learners are developing communication, team-working and planning skills well through work contributing to the community. Younger learners mix well with a wide range of people, including those with disabilities, the older generation and people from other ethnic communities. They develop a good understanding of the barriers other people face. A significant number of community learners work either as volunteers with community projects or are using their training to offer learning to groups with special needs.

## **The quality of provision**

## **Grade 2**

15. Teaching and learning are good overall. In better sessions, lively and interesting learning activities engage learners and encourage them to develop confidence. Good interaction encourages teamwork and motivates learners to make valuable contributions. Tutors use a range of topics well to develop learners' personal and social skills. Learners benefit from the small class sizes where the tutors give good individual support. Staff and tutors skilfully employ effective intervention strategies to assist potentially disengaged and vulnerable learners to enable them to continue to make progress. However, a minority of tutors do not always meet individual learners' needs sufficiently and do not always provide effective challenge. Initial assessment is variable across the provision and not all tutors effectively record learners' personal targets. Not all tutors record progress in reviews well.
16. The provision meets the needs of learners and communities well. Social inclusion is a strong feature of the work of all HLC's partners. As a result, learners who have previously had negative experiences of education begin to enjoy learning. Others who have had limited education opportunities benefit from gaining access to courses and training at different levels. This enables them to gain or improve their qualifications and increase their employability. For some young learners, workplacements enhance their learning experience. For others, opportunities to volunteer and to gain accreditation as volunteers empowers them as well as improving their employability.
17. Partnership work is good. HLC works very well with a wide range of carefully selected partners from the voluntary and community sector. Capacity building of these organisations is a particular strength of HLC's work. Through good partnership working, HLC is able to provide a good match between provision and the diverse needs of communities and individuals. Partner organisations include those that target specific groups such as women, disabled people or young people not in education, employment or training. The good partnership work also enables learners to gain access to provision that helps them identify and overcome individual and social barriers. As a result, learners are well

motivated to learn, make good progress towards achieving positive outcomes and their aspirations are raised.

18. Overall, care, guidance and support are good. Individualised personal support, advice and guidance enable learners to take a full part in their programmes. HLC has effective links with a range of external support agencies that are used well. Teachers provide good one-to-one pastoral support that enables learners to gain access to support services locally. Staff encourage learners to raise their aspirations, become better citizens and act as positive role models. In one centre, learners who have achieved their learning goals now act as learning mentors for less confident learners when they begin their studies. Learners feel valued and they appreciate the approachable staff who are sensitive to individual needs. Staff quickly gain a very good knowledge and understanding of learners' individual needs. However, some centres do not always actively share information with tutors on specific support needs of learners.

## **Leadership and management**

## **Grade 2**

19. Leadership and management at HLC are strong; this promotes ambition among their partners and raises the expectations for learners. Managers and staff at HLC have a good and clear understanding of the vision, mission and core values of the organisation and all participate and contribute to the achievement of their key strategic and charitable priorities. Senior managers have taken very effective actions to relocate and restructure the organisation to position the organisation better in the changing climate of funded learning. The revised organisational structure is more streamlined and effective and the new premises promote more effective and constructive communication at all levels in the organisation.
20. A small group of trustees provides a very effective 'sounding board' to the senior management team and guides HLC well. Coming from within the sector, they are knowledgeable and able to question the senior managers in detail to support actions to meet strategic goals and in reviewing new opportunities for the organisation. They participate fully in a range of staff events so that all members of staff know them and are able to communicate with them both formally and informally. Financial and performance oversight is rigorous. HLC's reports to trustees are detailed and trustees review these very effectively to provide an accurate review of HLC's performance.
21. The promotion of safeguarding to learners is effective and meets all the statutory requirements. All HLC staff are vetted and trained in safeguarding. HLC promotes training in safeguarding awareness and child protection to its partners. Trained designated officers and a designated trustee are in place. HLC reviews partners' policies and procedures. However, the checking and monitoring of these is inconsistent.
22. The promotion of equality and diversity to learners is good. HLC targets provision at communities and groups from areas of the highest deprivation to achieve its strategic objectives regarding social cohesion and demonstrating

public benefit from their programmes. They produce a good range of accessible resources for partners such as an equality calendar and an equality and diversity toolkit. Partners use these well to promote learning about equality and diversity.

23. Engagement with users and stakeholders overall is good. The relationships between HLC and its partners and external stakeholders are excellent. However, HLC recognises and identifies that its relationships with employers need further development. Partners express high levels of satisfaction with how HLC works with them in both a supportive and developmental way to improve their systems and processes. HLC makes good use of the inspection framework in its detailed and effective quality systems to monitor key aspects of programmes with partners. HLC monitors the quality of partners' provision and audits their compliance with contract and quality requirements through regular and frequent meetings. Managers make good use of observation processes to identify good practice and individual tutors' development needs. HLC's use of its resources to secure value for money is good.

## **Information about the inspection**

24. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's quality and programmes manager, 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 funding body and data on learners and their achievement.
  
25. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gain the views of learners and employers. They also looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed for the provider. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes the provider offers.

**Record of Main Findings (RMF)**  
**Humber Learning Consortium**  
**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 <b>using the 4 point scale</b> 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	16-18 Learner responsive	Personal and social development
<b>Approximate number of enrolled learners</b>			
Full-time learners	0	0	0
Part-time learners	268	181	87
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	2		
<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2		
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		
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	3		
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	2		
<b>Quality of provision</b>	<b>2</b>		
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		
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>		
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2		
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	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?	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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