

# CXL

## Inspection report

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**Unique reference number:** 58468

**Name of lead inspector:** Bob Busby HMI

**Last day of inspection:** 6 July 2012

**Type of provider:** Independent learning provider  
Chorley House  
Centurion Way

**Address:** Lancashire Enterprise Business Park  
Leyland  
PR26 6TT

**Telephone number:** 01772 642400

## Information about the provider

1. CX Limited (CXL) is one division of the Via Partnership, a social business based in Leyland, Lancashire that operates from premises in Leyland, Blackburn with Darwen and Darwen. Lancashire County Council, Blackpool Council and Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council own the Via Partnership. The chief executive has overall responsibility for Via Partnership supported by one director and three assistant directors who are responsible for operations, marketing, and business and workforce development. The company employs 117 staff of which 11 are managers and 16 are principal consultants/team leaders.
2. Via Partnership holds contracts with the Skills Funding Agency for apprenticeships and targeted support work for learners who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). In addition, Via Partnership contracts with the Department for Work and Pensions, The Prison Service, local authorities and Connexions Partnerships and is also subcontracted to deliver a National Careers Service to adults across areas of Lancashire. The Skills Funding Agency provides approximately 25% of the company's revenue; the remaining income is earned through other contracts including 10% from commercial training and services. Much of the Company's business is based in the north west of England around the head office in Leyland, Lancashire. The Via Partnership underwent a major restructure at all levels in 2010 following the merger with Lancashire Education Business Partnership and the acquisition of VOISE, a work-based learning provider in March 2011.
3. CXL has 82 apprentices in health, care and public services of which the majority are enrolled on health and social care (adult) frameworks. Most learners are on intermediate level programmes. All children's and young people's workforce frameworks are at advanced levels. Overall, there is around an equal number of intermediate and advanced apprentices. Half of all learners are aged 25 years and over and of the remainder six learners are 16 to 18 years old. A quarter of all learners are male. CXL also has 228 learners following employability courses.
4. The unemployment rate in Blackburn with Darwen between October 2010 and September 2011 was 8.1%, which is slightly higher than the rate for the north west and the national rate of 7.1%. The proportion of the population aged 16 to 64 who hold no qualifications is 18.1%, much higher than the rate for the north west of 12.1% and the national rate of 11.3%. According to the 2001 census, the proportion of Blackburn with Darwen's population from minority ethnic groups was 22.1%, compared with the rate for the north west of 5.6% and the national average of 9.1%.
5. CXL provides training on behalf of the following providers:
  - Lancashire Adult Learning (team leading)
6. The following organisation provides training on behalf of CXL:

- Blackburn College (employability courses)
- Bootstrap Enterprises (employability courses)
- Beneast (General Physics) (employability courses)
- Blackpool Young Peoples Service (employability courses)
- Princes Trust (employability courses)

<b>Type of provision</b>	<b>Number of enrolled learners in 2010/11</b>
<b>Provision for young learners:</b> 14 to16	384 part-time learners
Entry to Employment	459 part-time learners

## Summary report

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of provision</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>
	<b>Grade</b>
Outcomes for learners	3
Quality of provision	3
Leadership and management	3
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	3
<b>Subject Areas</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Health, public services and care	<b>3</b>

## Overall effectiveness

7. The overall effectiveness of CXL’s provision is satisfactory. CXL ensures learners enjoy their learning and most are making satisfactory progress. Appropriately planned programmes enable learners to complete within their planned timescale. Learners develop appropriate skills for the workplace and gain in confidence and self-esteem. They display satisfactory skills development and work at the level required for the qualification. Many learners progress to higher levels of responsibility within their workplaces. Learners on employability programmes develop appropriate skills and make satisfactory progress. A few progress to higher education or voluntary work as a route to employment. CXL effectively monitors the progress made by different groups of learners.
  
8. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The better lessons are characterised by good pace and a variety of well balanced activities. Assessors know their learners well and help them develop satisfactory practical skills. CXL provides a suitable range of additional programmes, which are a requirement for working in the sector. These provide appropriate opportunities for learners to develop additional skills. Assessment practices are satisfactory. Assessors visit learners frequently and work well with work-based assessors to offer flexible assessment.

9. CXL has satisfactory relationships with employers, public and private companies to ensure that the training is appropriate to local needs. CXL works well with a good range of employers to offer work experience to learners following employability programmes.
10. Arrangements to support learners are satisfactory. Effective links to specialist agencies help in supporting the wider needs of the most vulnerable learners. Staff are well qualified in providing information, advice and guidance. CXL has recently introduced specialised support sessions for literacy and numeracy but it is too early to judge their effectiveness.
11. CXL leads and manages its provision adequately. Managers monitor performance satisfactorily. CXL collects and analyses learners' and employers' views but does not sufficiently report back on actions taken. The use of resources to secure value for money is satisfactory.

## Main findings

- Learners enjoy learning and make at least satisfactory progress across a range of activities. Many learners show significant gains in confidence and self-esteem and re-engage with learning. Most learners make good progress in relating theoretical knowledge to their workplace skills. Work within portfolios is of a satisfactory standard meeting the requirements of the qualification. However, some portfolios contain too high a proportion of reflective accounts.
- At 96%, retention is high on the health and social care programme. Retention is satisfactory on the children and young people's workforce programme at 82%. All learners are employed and work within the sector. Outcomes on employability programmes are good. Many learners raise their aspirations and seek to enter higher education or engage in volunteering programmes as a route to gain employment.
- Learners' completion of functional skills is satisfactory but is left very late in the programme. The provider is in the process of implementing a detailed functional skills action plan. Recently developed resources are being made available to learners and staff through a virtual resource bank but it is too soon to judge their effectiveness.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory and ensure that learners make satisfactory progress. Arrangements for review and assessment are mostly good. Learners receive frequent visits in the workplace. Assessors work well with work-based assessors. However, not all assessment and review documentation is fully completed. Targets are often insufficiently specific. Verbal feedback to learners is satisfactory.
- Learners are following appropriate programmes for their current job roles with access to a suitable range of additional qualifications all of which are required to work in the sector. Learners not in education, employment or training (NEET) are able to access a suitable range of programmes to improve their confidence and employability. Employers appreciate the effort that goes into ensuring that

learners are enrolled on the correct course according to their job role and ability.

- CXL has satisfactory relationships with employers, public and private companies. Assessors work well with employers to ensure that the training they are delivering is appropriate to their needs. However, for some employers, communication with CXL managers is insufficient in order to ensure training and assessment are better aligned to promote learner progress. CXL has a good range of employers who provide work experience to NEET clients.
- Arrangements to support learners are satisfactory. Good individual information advice and guidance are provided to learners to ensure they are enrolled on appropriate programmes to meet their individual needs. CXL has recently introduced specialised support sessions for literacy and numeracy but it is too early to judge their effectiveness. For NEET learners, good support is provided for the neediest through partnership working with a wide range of agencies.
- Communications within the organisation are good. The strategic vision concentrates well on improving and expanding the provision following a period of rationalisation. Effective assessment practice is shared at assessor meetings attended by assessors from CXL and those based in the workplace. Staff have appropriate annual appraisals and have access to staff development. All staff are suitably experienced and hold, or are working towards, appropriate qualifications.
- Arrangements for safeguarding are good. Learners show good awareness of the systems in place to protect them. The most vulnerable learners feel safe and confident in how to report issues. Criminal record bureau (CRB) checks on staff are made every three years. Staff and learners have received training in the safeguarding of adults. Good arrangements are in place to ensure that sub-contractors delivering training and employers offering work placements are also CRB checked.
- Arrangements for quality improvement are satisfactory. Quality measures on employability programmes are thorough but are not fully integrated on the newer, apprenticeship programmes. CXL recognises that aspects of quality improvement, particularly the sharing of good practice and the effective use of the outcomes from observations of key learner processes require further improvement.
- CXL has satisfactory arrangements to use learner views and employer views in contributing towards improvement. User views are suitably collected through surveys at key points in their programmes, end-of-session evaluations and during progress reviews. They are thoroughly analysed and presented to managers and staff. However, CXL is aware that actions taken are insufficiently recorded and are not systematically reported back to users.
- CXL recognises the need to improve the use of management information and has purchased a new system to manage data. The current system is unable to provide detailed management reports to monitor and contribute to change. Equality and Diversity data is collected and thoroughly analysed on learner

recruitment and will be further collected on outcomes as learners start to achieve from August 2012.

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

- Improve the planning of teaching, learning and assessment so that learners develop knowledge and skills throughout their programme and have access to a wider range of assessment opportunities including the early assessment of functional skills. Ensure all activities are well documented and meet the needs of all learners.
- Increase the development of, and access to, appropriate resources for learners. Ensure that all resources required in improving learners' knowledge and understanding can be conveniently accessed and used by all. Develop employer liaison at all levels in the company so that partnership working is strengthened and individual learners' programmes are tailored to the employment and assessment opportunities that naturally occur within the workplace.
- Enhance the understanding and use of individually specific targets so that all learners know what they have to do to improve their performance. Closely monitor and record learner progress to ensure they achieve their qualification in a timely manner.
- Improve the recognition and sharing of good practice across the organisation to aid close working in improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, ensuring that all learners have a high quality experience.
- Make better use of learner and employer feedback in contributing to improvements across the organisation. Ensure that users receive prompt feedback on actions taken on their behalf or at their suggestion.

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

#### **What learners like:**

- clear explanations to aid learning
- high levels of help and support
- patient tutors and assessors who aid understanding and improving skills
- constant availability of the work-based assessors
- the welcoming, friendly learning environment.

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

- more individual time working with the assessor
- less confusing wording on awarding body documents
- less time-consuming diary sheets
- more information on how to access resources to aid assignment work or research.

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

### **What employers like:**

- the helpful meetings with service managers prior to enrolment
- individual meetings between assessors and learners providing close support
- high levels of personal contact ensuring employers are well informed
- training programmes being structured to meet individuals' needs.

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

- better communication and liaison on learner progress and key events
- a signed partnership agreement between employer and assessment centre
- more support for learners to achieve functional skills
- better access to resources to support training
- more information regarding training and what the learners are doing in the workplace.

## Main inspection report

### Capacity to make and sustain improvement

**Grade 3**

12. Overall outcomes for learners are satisfactory. However, outcomes on employability programmes are good. No learners have yet completed apprenticeships; the first cohort is due to achieve in August 2012. Most apprentices are making satisfactory progress. However, there is some evidence that actions taken are beginning to have a positive effect on the current learners. Retention rates are high on health and social care programmes and are satisfactory on children and young people's workforce programmes. All learners on apprenticeship programmes are employed, many have taken on additional responsibilities within the workplace following their development of additional skills. CXL knows its learners well and supports their needs appropriately.
13. CXL recognises that the provision and use of detailed management information to identify areas for improvement requires development. A new management information system has been purchased but it is too soon to judge its effectiveness. Communication across the organisation is effective in ensuring staff and managers are kept fully informed about progress.
14. Self-assessment and quality improvement procedures are satisfactory. Comprehensive and well managed processes are in place to monitor and improve the employability programmes. Systems to monitor quality on work-based learning programmes are not yet fully established. Sharing of good practice has started but it is too soon to judge its effectiveness in improving the provision. Feedback from learners and employers is collected and analysed but actions taken for improvement following user's suggestions are not reported back effectively. Following major restructuring over the last two years, all staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities and contribute to the drive for improvement.

### Outcomes for learners

**Grade 3**

15. Learners enjoy learning and make at least satisfactory progress across a range of activities. On work-based learning programmes, no learners are due to achieve until August 2012. Those learners close to their end date are making satisfactory progress. Learners' portfolios are of a satisfactory standard and meet the requirements of the awarding body. Retention on the health and social care programme is high, at 96%. Retention on the children and young people's workforce programme is satisfactory at 82%. Learners display increased competence, confidence and self-esteem throughout their apprenticeship. Some learners gain promotion after increasing their skills range during training. Most learners make good progress in relating theoretical knowledge to their workplace skills. Learners' completion of functional skills is satisfactory.

16. Outcomes on employability programmes are good. CXL regularly exceeds contractual targets. Learners show significant gains in confidence and self-esteem as well as improving employability skills. Many learners are encouraged to raise their aspirations and seek to enter higher education or engage in volunteering programmes as a route to gaining employment.

## **The quality of provision**

## **Grade 3**

17. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and ensure that learners make satisfactory progress. In the better sessions, there is good attention to individual need. Tutors know their learners well. However, many session plans lack detail, particularly around learning and assessment strategies. Information Learning Technology (ILT) is used appropriately in the workplace with power point presentations on laptops and good use of short video sequences to provide further explanation or clarify points. Where available, learners are using the electronic portfolio effectively and employers are supportive of this development. Staff are suitably qualified and experienced in the areas in which they are teaching and assessing. They have access to sufficient staff development to ensure they remain vocationally competent, ensuring their learners receive up-to-date knowledge.
18. Arrangements for review and assessment are mostly good. Assessors visit learners frequently in their workplaces and work very well with work-based assessors to offer a flexible assessment service to meet learner and employer needs. Through good joint working, CXL offers a flexible assessment service to their learners that covers all shift patterns, enabling broad access to assessment and support. Good use is made of email between assessors and learners, maintaining regular contact between assessor visits and access to help and support between visits. However, although a suitable range of evidence-gathering methods are used, portfolios contain too high a proportion of reflective accounts. Not all documentation is completed effectively. In some cases, targets are insufficiently explicit. For example, targets often refer to completion of whole units rather than the short-term targets that enable learners to manage their time and make good and timely progress towards their full frameworks. Feedback provided to learners on submitted work is satisfactory but is mainly verbal.
19. CXL offers a satisfactory range of programmes in health, public services and care. Learners are following appropriate programmes for their current job roles and can access a suitable range of additional qualifications, which are a requirement for working in the sector. CXL has improved the timing of functional skills tuition since taking over the provision from Voise. Functional skills are no longer delivered late in the programme. The provider has developed a functional skills action plan that is in the process of implementation. Resources have been developed and are starting to be made available to learners and staff through a virtual resource bank. Specialist support sessions have recently been organised but it is too early to judge their

effectiveness. Learners on employability programmes access a suitable range of courses to improve their confidence and employability.

20. CXL has satisfactory relationships with employers, public and private companies to provide training. Assessors work well with employers to ensure that the training they are delivering is appropriate to the learners' needs within their workplace and their individual capabilities. However, for some employers there is insufficient communication with CXL managers in order to ensure that training and assessment aid learner progression through a more integrated approach. CXL works with a good range of employers who offer work experience to NEET clients.
21. Arrangements to support learners are satisfactory. In some instances, there is good individual information advice and guidance to learners to ensure they are enrolled on appropriate programmes to meet their individual training needs. Staff are well qualified in providing information, advice and guidance. Learners undergo suitable initial assessment and where required they may also undergo diagnostic assessment. Learners receive satisfactory additional learning support from assessors in the workplace and further support sessions are available to learners on the company's premises. Employers appreciate the pre-enrolment service they and their learners receive from CXL that ensures their employees are enrolled onto relevant courses related to their ability and job roles. CXL has recently introduced specialised support sessions for literacy and numeracy but it is too early to judge their effectiveness. For learners on employability programmes, learners receive good support to meet their wider needs through well established partnerships with a wide range of agencies.

## **Leadership and management**

## **Grade 3**

22. The company's strategic vision is well focused on improving provision and modest expansion following a period of rationalisation. Managers and staff understand the strategic direction of CXL and how they can contribute towards achievement of the organisation's aims. Communications within the organisation are good. Assessor meetings are well attended by assessors from CXL and also by assessors based in the workplace. All staff are suitably experienced and hold, or are working towards teaching qualifications. Staff have appropriate annual performance appraisals and access to focused staff development to maintain their occupational knowledge and competence.
23. CXL has taken steps to improve the use of management information across the company and has very recently purchased a new system, to be introduced in the very near future, to manage data. The current system is unable to provide sufficiently detailed management information to monitor and use as a basis for change. Managers make use of existing information in several formats but data is not yet systematically available to allow them to monitor closely the performance of learners.

24. CXL's arrangements for safeguarding are good. Learners say they feel safe and can explain and use safe working practices in their workplaces. They show good awareness of the systems in place to protect them. The majority of apprentices have undergone training in health and safety and in the safeguarding of vulnerable adults. They have a good awareness of how to protect themselves and who to inform should they have any cause for concern. CXL carries out appropriate checks on staff, which are repeated every three years. All staff have received safeguarding training and can access refresher training throughout the year. CXL has good arrangements to ensure that sub-contractors delivering training and employers offering work placements are also appropriately checked. The most vulnerable learners feel safe and are confident in how to report issues.
25. CXL has satisfactory arrangements to promote equality and diversity. Suitable policies and procedures are in place and understood by staff. Effective arrangements are in place to ensure all staff access training in equality and diversity. All learners have a satisfactory understanding of equality and diversity through induction and reinforcement during reviews. More experienced learners demonstrate a better understanding, particularly those on the learning disability pathway. CXL collects and thoroughly analyses equality and diversity data on learner recruitment to identify any under-represented groups and actions are taken where necessary. For example, CXL has successfully recruited high numbers of men onto health and social care courses. CXL has plans to similarly collect and use data on learner outcomes as they start to emerge. CXL effectively monitors the progress made by different groups of learners.
26. CXL has satisfactory arrangements to use learner views and employer views to use as a basis for improvement. User views are suitably collected through surveys at key points in learners' programmes and through end-of-session evaluations and during progress reviews. Views are summarised, analysed and shared with staff. However, CXL recognises that subsequent actions taken to secure improvement are not well recorded and are not systematically reported back to users.
27. Self-assessment and quality improvement procedures are satisfactory. Comprehensive and well managed processes are in place to monitor the quality of the employability programmes and these are now used to improve the quality of the apprenticeship programmes. The quality systems to monitor work-based learning programmes have led to improvements in paperwork and initial assessment. However, CXL recognises that aspects of quality improvement on these programmes, particularly the sharing of good practice and the effective use of the outcomes from observations of key learner processes, require further improvement.

## Information about the inspection

28. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one additional inspector, assisted by the provider's operations 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.
29. 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 in each of the subject areas the provider offers.

**Record of Main Findings (RMF)**

**CXL**

**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	14-16	16-18 Learner responsive	19+ Learner responsive	Employer responsive
<b>Approximate number of enrolled learners</b>					
Full-time learners	0	0	0	0	0
Part-time learners	320	124	99	5	92
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	3				
<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	3				
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	3				
How well do learners progress?	3				
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	3				
How safe do learners feel?	2				
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	n/a				
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	n/a				
<b>Quality of provision</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	3				
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	3				
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?	3				
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	3				
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	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?	3				
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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