

Sunderland City Council

Local authority

Inspection dates

16–19 January 2018

Overall effectiveness		Inadequate	
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate	Adult learning programmes	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement	Apprenticeships	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Inadequate		
Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection			Good

Summary of key findings

This is an inadequate provider

- Safeguarding is ineffective. Leaders and managers do not monitor safeguarding concerns as part of contract management. As a result, they cannot assure themselves that learners and apprentices are safe.
- Leaders and managers have not assessed adequately the risks related to radicalisation and extremism, and they have not ensured that staff are well prepared to discuss these risks with learners and apprentices. Consequently, the large majority of learners and apprentices do not understand how to stay safe from these risks.
- Self-assessment is weak. Managers are not effective enough in improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Elected members and senior leaders have been too slow to recognise and hold managers to account for the recent deterioration in the achievement of apprentices and the emerging safeguarding concerns. They have not been decisive enough in ensuring that managers take action to address these issues.
- Contract management for the apprenticeship provision has not been robust enough to identify and arrest the deterioration in the quality of the provision since the last inspection.
- Apprenticeship provision does not fully meet the principles and requirements of apprenticeships.

The provider has the following strengths

- The large majority of learners on adult learning programmes enjoy their learning, achieve their learning goals and progress to further learning, employment or apprenticeships. They achieve greater independence and have increased involvement in their communities and with their families.
- Elected members are committed and passionate advocates of the benefits that the service brings to local residents.
- Senior leaders and managers have developed a curriculum that meets the needs of employers and communities well.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Sunderland City Council has recently merged its family, adult and community learning (FACL) provision with its apprenticeship provision, the Tyne and Wear Care Alliance (TWCA). FACL provides adult learning programmes for learners who are hoping to improve their prospects of employment, develop their contributions to their communities and families, and improve their mental and physical health. The majority of TWCA's apprenticeships are in health and social care. At the time of inspection, all learning programmes and apprenticeships were delivered by subcontractors.
- The service operates in an area of high unemployment and deprivation. The percentage of people qualified to level 3 or above is lower than the national average. Manufacturing, retail, and health and social care are the largest local employment sectors.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Urgently improve safeguarding arrangements by:
 - carrying out a risk assessment in line with the requirements of the national guidance on the implementation of the 'Prevent' duty for further education and skills providers, and develop an action plan to address the issues identified through the risk assessment
 - supporting tutors and assessors to become more confident and skilled in discussing the nature of radicalisation and extremism, so that learners and apprentices become more aware of the risks that they face and how to protect themselves from harm
 - establishing a record of all safeguarding incidents and concerns that clearly details the nature of the incidents and actions taken
 - ensuring that the number and type of safeguarding incidents and concerns are analysed on a regular basis, and that they are reported to senior leaders within the local authority, so that trends can be identified and lessons can be learned
 - ensuring that all directly employed staff, staff at subcontractors, and learners are clear about how and to whom they should report any safeguarding incidents and concerns.
- Ensure that elected members and senior managers receive timely reports, informed by accurate data, on the performance of the service, including the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, so that they can hold service managers to account and intervene more decisively if performance does not improve.
- Strengthen the arrangements for monitoring the performance of subcontractors, placing a greater emphasis on assuring the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Improve managers' use and understanding of management information, including data, so that they can be more self-critical in their evaluation of the quality of provision and develop specific, timed and monitored improvement actions.
- Ensure that all apprentices receive their entitlement to time for off-the-job training at work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Contract management for the apprenticeship provision is inadequate. Review meetings with subcontractors do not focus sufficiently on the reasons for the slow progress of apprentices or what needs to be done to overcome them. The management of contracts in adult learning has been more effective in ensuring that standards are maintained, but has not tackled all the areas for improvement since the last inspection. For example, there is still progress to be made in ensuring that challenging individual targets are set to enable all learners to make the progress of which they are capable.
- Managers are overgenerous in their evaluation of the quality of their provision. They do not use management information sufficiently well to inform their judgements. Data analysis to inform actions to improve the service is superficial or absent. Data reviewed by managers are not accurate or timely enough to enable managers to improve the quality of provision.
- Quality improvement actions do not address the underlying causes for the areas of poor performance, and managers do not monitor the actions they have planned through to their completion.
- Senior leaders and managers do not receive sufficient information on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to assure themselves that this is of a good standard or that managers are taking appropriate action to improve it.
- Managers are not effective enough in ensuring that teaching, learning and assessment improve. Although the findings of the provider's own externally commissioned observations of teaching, learning and assessment and those of their subcontractors are generally accurate, there is too long a delay between agreeing actions for improvement and their implementation. Managers do not check routinely whether agreed actions have been carried out, and this further reduces the impact of observations of teaching, learning and assessment.

The governance of the provider

- Elected members, along with senior leaders in the directorate, are not sufficiently aware of the quality of the provision and so do not identify concerns in time to address them. Their oversight of the quality of the provision has been diluted in recent years by protracted discussions and changes of direction regarding proposals for major organisational and legal changes within the service.
- Elected members and senior managers have overseen the merger of three organisations, TWCA, FACL and Connexions, under a single service manager. They have an ambitious agenda to enable progression from local schools through to adult apprenticeships. Leaders and managers have also agreed to cease subcontracting their apprenticeship delivery and bring it in house. Commendable as these plans are, it is too early to see their impact.
- Elected members are staunch supporters of the service. They engage well in decisions about strategic objectives, and they bring their knowledge of their communities to inform

the priorities for the delivery of adult and community learning.

- Senior leaders and managers ensure that the curriculum serves local employment and community priorities well. TWCA's subregional networks engage a wide range of social care providers, from large national providers to sole traders, to enable it to deliver provision that develops the skills and knowledge of employees. The adult learning subcontractors deliver courses that address fully the strategic priorities of the council.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Managers too often place the responsibility for developing a culture of safeguarding with subcontractors, without fully recognising their own role in ensuring effective safeguarding policies and procedures. Routine contract monitoring visits pay cursory attention to checking whether or not there have been any safeguarding concerns at subcontractors.
- Managers have not undertaken a risk assessment or developed an action plan to implement the 'Prevent' duty. They have been over-reliant on the council's corporate plan, which is not disseminated widely and is not specific enough in relation to the context of adult learning. Although the great majority of managers and staff have completed some form of training in respect of the 'Prevent' duty, this has not given them the knowledge, skills and confidence to inform their learners about the risks of radicalisation and extremism. Managers are not always certain about what constitutes such a risk.
- Although no learners were found to be unsafe on inspection, managers cannot assure themselves of this because they do not keep a central log recording incidents and concerns at their subcontractors. As a result, managers do not know the number or nature of these concerns, and what actions have been taken to address them. They are not in a position to learn lessons or identify any trends in safeguarding.
- Recruitment checks of staff, including checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service, are robust for the small number of directly appointed staff and for the much larger number of tutors and assessors at subcontractors.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Tutors and assessors do not routinely use information gained from initial assessments of learners' and apprentices' starting points to plan learning that matches individual needs and goals. Although these assessments identify needs and goals, this information is not used well enough to ensure that learners and apprentices receive support to help them to make the progress of which they are capable. For example, subcontractors do not use discrete funding available to provide additional support for learners. Well-meaning tutors, assessors and volunteers provide informal individual support, but the lack of planning and monitoring of support reduces its effectiveness.
- Too many tutors and assessors do not ensure that learners and apprentices receive sufficiently challenging targets to help them get the most from their training. Too often, assessors set targets that are limited to the completion of units for a qualification. Most progress reviews are therefore focused on generic, unambitious goals. Apprentices are not encouraged to develop new skills and knowledge beyond the minimum requirements

of the qualification.

- Too many tutors and assessors provide feedback which does not help learners to improve their work, increase their knowledge or make the progress of which they are capable. Tutors' and assessors' comments on marked work are often too cursory to have real impact and feedback is rarely individualised. Consequently, the most able learners and apprentices are not challenged to extend their learning or develop a deeper understanding of their subject.
- Tutors and assessors do not routinely correct errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar. Consequently, learners and apprentices frequently repeat the same mistakes and do not develop their written English skills as well as they could.
- Tutors and assessors do not integrate effectively the teaching of mathematics and English into the majority of learning sessions. Although tutors teach discrete courses in English mathematics effectively, in other sessions, learners and apprentices do not have sufficient opportunities to improve these essential skills.
- The majority of tutors and assessors have good skills and experience but, in too many instances, they do not use these effectively enough to ensure that learners and apprentices make good progress. For example, a few tutors and assessors in health and social care use references to obsolete guidance and organisations because they have not kept up to date with current practice guidance.
- Tutors on adult learning programmes design and deliver engaging activities that motivate their learners well and build their self-confidence. Consequently, the large majority of their learners complete their courses successfully.
- Tutors and assessors promote equality and celebrate diversity very effectively. They ensure that learning sessions are highly inclusive and welcoming to all. As a result, learners feel valued, attend their sessions well and make good progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

- Managers are aware that the very large majority of learners and apprentices have very little understanding of the risks of radicalisation and extremism, and that they do not think that any such risks are relevant to them. Most learners and apprentices do not understand, and cannot explain, how to stay safe from these potential risks online, at work or in their communities. Moreover, because managers do not maintain a central record of safeguarding concerns or monitor actions in relation to any concerns, inspectors were unable to conclude that learners and apprentices are safe.
- Too many learners and apprentices do not develop sufficiently the English and mathematics skills that are necessary for the world of work.
- The large majority of learners on adult learning programmes receive good information, advice and guidance to ensure that they enrol onto the most appropriate courses. Tutors continue to provide high-quality guidance during and on completion of learning programmes to enable learners to progress to their next steps. Networks of subcontractors in adult learning enable very useful referrals to other providers if their courses are in the learner's best interests. Subcontractors such as Penshaw View Training keep in touch with learners whom they have advised to go elsewhere, so that they can then offer further courses when the learner is ready. Learners value this contact and the

integrity and objectivity of the information, advice and guidance they receive. They are able to make well-informed decisions about the next stage of their education, employment or voluntary work.

- The large majority of learners on adult learning programmes take pride in their work and develop their self-esteem. Many learners have multiple disadvantages, including generations of unemployment in their families and communities, health problems, low prior attainment in education and significant social problems. Nonetheless, they develop a good sense of their own potential and a renewed sense of hope for the future as a result of the courses they take.
- Most learners and apprentices value their learning, behave professionally and come prepared to learn. They are courteous and respectful, and treat one another with consideration.
- The very large majority of learners on adult programmes attend their courses well and this helps them to make good progress. Learners are punctual and take responsibility for their own learning.
- Apprentices undertake additional qualifications, such as certificates in end of life care and dementia care. This prepares them well for the world of work and increases their chances of sustained employment.

Outcomes for learners

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, there has been a steep decline in the proportion of apprentices who complete their frameworks within planned timescales. Although this proportion is now increasing, too many current apprentices still do not progress as quickly as they should.
- Male apprentices make particularly slow progress. Managers have neither identified this gap nor put in place actions to close it.
- Too many apprentices leave their apprenticeship before completion. Managers are aware of this and have put in measures to improve retention rates. These measures have resulted in some improvements, and the proportion of apprentices who are taking a break or who have withdrawn is lower than in previous years. However, it is still too high.
- The large majority of learners on adult programmes enjoy their learning and make good progress. This is the case both for programmes leading to qualifications and for programmes which do not. Most adult learners achieve their qualifications or other learning goals.
- The large majority of adult learners on programmes designed to lead to qualifications or employment progress to further learning, paid employment, voluntary work or other positive destinations after their courses. For example, many adult learners gain employment in contact centres, as teaching assistants and in retail.
- Most learners on adult programmes greatly improve their confidence and independence, and their contributions to the quality of life of their families and communities. Learners say that their courses transform their lives and, in many cases, those of their families. Feedback from employers suggests that contributions made by adult learners also help to transform organisations and communities. For example, family learning courses in one

primary school had not only helped the adults taking the courses but also the children in the school and the school community as a whole. Adult learners who complete courses frequently become volunteers or teaching assistants in the schools that host the courses, to the benefit of all.

- Most learners on adult programmes develop new knowledge, skills and attitudes which bring them closer to the labour market and enable many to become self-supporting. For example, one learner used the knowledge and skills gained by taking a family craft course to set up her own online business selling ornaments and jewellery. Another learner took a course in childcare and then set up a play scheme in her community.

Types of provision

Adult learning programmes

Requires improvement

- Family, adult and community learning (FACL) provision is delivered through a wide range of subcontractors. Just under half of the courses lead to qualifications such as diplomas in health and social care. The remaining courses include family learning, pre-employability courses, courses to support health and well-being, and courses to reduce social isolation and increase integration.
- Safeguarding on adult learning programmes is not effective. Adult learning programmes are designed to meet the needs of vulnerable, isolated and economically inactive residents in particular. However, there is little recognition within the service that these adults might be at risk from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. Staff are ill-equipped to discuss these dangers with learners. A learners' handbook makes brief reference to the 'Prevent' duty and a few tutors mention the duty during induction. However, coverage of the attendant risks is inadequate and no checks are made to find out whether learners are aware of the risks. Consequently, learners only have a rudimentary understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.
- FACL managers do not keep, and did not understand the importance of, central records of any safeguarding concerns or issues within the provision, and so they cannot assure themselves of the safety of their learners. Learners say that they feel safe and they know about health and safety risk assessments, fire safety, security and signing-in arrangements. However, their sense of safety is not justified by wider safeguarding practices in FACL.
- Tutors have recently started to collect information about learners' different starting points in English, mathematics and digital skills. However, this information relies too much on learners' own self-assessment of their skills and is not yet used well enough by staff to ensure that learners make progress in these areas.
- Tutors' feedback to learners does not focus enough on their progress in relation to all their learning targets. Tutors give very positive and encouraging feedback to learners to boost their confidence during most sessions. While this motivates learners and increases their self-esteem, it does not always help them to make progress in terms of their knowledge and skills.
- Learners are aware of what is expected of them on their courses. Tutors set targets and

review progress in each session. When targets are individualised, and when tutors plan and deliver suitably stretching activities, learners' progress is good, especially for the most able learners. However, in a few cases, targets do not take sufficient account of learners' starting points in terms of knowledge, skills, experience and prior attainment, and this hinders progress.

- Managers have ensured that the curriculum is highly responsive to local needs and to the council's strategic objectives. The curriculum is informed by effective, long-standing relationships with subcontractors, schools, Jobcentre Plus and other partners, who ensure that delivery centres are accessible and welcoming. Consequently, the provision is able to reach residents throughout the community who have previously found it difficult to engage with education or employment.
- The large majority of learners benefit from very well-resourced learning environments which increase their self-esteem and facilitate the development of their skills. For example, learners on a non-accredited ceramics course with MBC Ceramics attend classes in industry-standard workshops at the National Glass Centre.
- Most tutors plan sessions well and use a range of engaging learning activities and resources that lead to high levels of motivation and aid learners' progress. As a result, the large majority of learners complete their courses and achieve their qualifications or other learning objectives.
- The majority of tutors set work for learners to complete between sessions. This helps learners to make good progress. For example, learners on health and social care courses with Training in Care are required to research current affairs each week so that they can discuss in the next session how these might impact on matters related to health and social care. Learners competently discussed the implications for their sector of diverse issues such as the collapse of a major company.
- Learners greatly increase their confidence as a result of their courses. For example, a group of learners on pre-employability courses, who were initially reluctant to attend mandated classes, reported that they benefit immensely from the provision. They are much more positive about their futures as a result of activities designed to change their approach and attitudes.
- Learners develop positive habits that prepare them well for their next steps. Most learners attend well and are punctual. Their professional behaviour is informed by mutually agreed codes of conduct based on the British values of tolerance and respect, and workplace expectations. As a result, learners are greatly valued by employers, who frequently respond by providing opportunities for voluntary or paid work.

Apprenticeships

Inadequate

- Apprenticeship provision is delivered through Tyne and Wear Care Alliance (TWCA) to support the care sector workforce in the north-east. The large majority of apprenticeships are in health and social care. Until very recently, all apprenticeship provision was delivered by subcontractors and was entirely framework-based. However, TWCA managers have now decided to bring apprenticeship delivery in house and have plans to deliver apprenticeship standards in health and social care. Most apprentices are aged 19 and above and are on intermediate- or advanced-level apprenticeships. TWCA also

delivers a small number of higher-level apprenticeships.

- Safeguarding on apprenticeship provision is ineffective. Apprentices do not understand how to keep themselves safe from risks, including the risks of radicalisation and extremism, or how to report any safeguarding concerns that they may have. TWCA managers do not have a record of safeguarding issues or incidents at subcontractors and therefore do not know whether or not apprentices are safe. Apprentices' understanding of safeguarding is mostly limited to issues that might affect their clients.
- Leaders and managers have not ensured that provision fully meets the principles and requirements of apprenticeships. Managers do not monitor the training that subcontractors provide to ensure that apprentices receive their entitlement to off-the-job training time. As a result, too many employers do not give apprentices enough time to complete their training and do not contribute to apprentices' learning. Apprentices often have to complete work during their days off. This delays their progress, and too many find it too difficult to complete their apprenticeships.
- Managers and assessors do not have high enough aspirations for apprentices to complete their frameworks within planned timescales. Managers often attribute slow progress to the apprentices themselves, without questioning whether employers have a part to play in delays. Too many apprentices take breaks in learning. Consequently, too much apprenticeship provision does not meet minimum standards.
- Following the recent merger, managers have started to put in place new systems to check the progress of apprentices. However, these have yet to be fully implemented, and data are not yet analysed well enough to underpin secure monitoring or convincing predictions. As a result, actions to improve progress do not happen quickly enough.
- Assessors provide support and encouragement that help apprentices to develop confidence. A few apprentices take on additional responsibilities or gain promotion at work as a result of their apprenticeships. For example, an apprentice became a 'dementia champion' at her workplace and several others were able to move into training roles in their organisations.

Provider details

Unique reference number	54666
Type of provider	Local authority
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	3,022
Principal/CEO	Moira Pinkney
Telephone number	0191 548 4015
Website	www.sunderland.gov.uk https://facl.org.uk www.twca.org.uk

Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 or above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	-	209	-	85	-	-	-	-
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	2	185	1	209	-	58		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	-							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	-							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Penshaw View MBC Ceramics Training in Care Age UK Apextra Learning Foundation of Light Uplift Associates Absolute Care Learning for Ever							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of service, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

Inspection team

Rebecca Clare, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Charles Searle	Her Majesty's Inspector
Dan Grant	Ofsted Inspector
Lynne Paxton	Ofsted Inspector
Bev Cross	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
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Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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