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Ms Jacqui Old  
Director of Children and Adult Services  
North Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council  
Quadrant  
16 The Silverlink North  
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North Tyneside  
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Dear Ms Old

### **Short inspection of North Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council**

Following the short inspection on 17 and 18 April 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since the provider was judged to be good in May 2013.

#### **This provider continues to be good.**

Since the previous inspection, you and your managers have successfully realigned the education and training that you offer through the adult learning service to the delivery of the council's workforce development strategy. In 2017, leaders of the council restructured the adult learning provision to create a single, integrated employment and skills service to focus on developing skills for work and meeting the needs of vulnerable residents within the borough. Following the restructure, your managers carried out a thorough strategic review of all the courses offered by the service. A large number of courses that did not meet the refocused strategic aims are no longer on offer.

Senior leaders within the council support the adult learning service very effectively. They have an ambitious vision and a comprehensive understanding of the work of the service. They are passionate in their belief in the importance of the service in delivering the wider council strategy for the local area; this includes maintaining the very low levels of young people not engaged in education, employment or training in North Tyneside. The council cabinet member for children and young people meets the service managers on a weekly basis and provides them with effective challenge to maintain the high standards of education and training.

You and your managers make very good use of external partners to support the design and delivery of courses to meet the needs of your learners. For example, staff from partner organisations help to train learners on study programmes to gain

good vocational skills in areas such as cleaning, construction and horticulture. Your managers work with a charity to share a high-quality classroom, kitchen and cafe to provide training in hospitality to unemployed adults.

You and your managers have made very good progress in addressing the issues identified at the previous inspection. Your own assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the service and of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is accurate. Consequently, the vast majority of learners and apprentices continue to benefit from good-quality education and training.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Learners and apprentices feel safe and know how to report any concerns they may have. Learners know how to keep themselves safe online and they display safe working practices in practical and high-risk working environments. However, learners and apprentices do not have sufficient understanding of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.

Managers ensure that staff, including volunteers, are trained appropriately for their roles and responsibilities within the centre. They carry out appropriate pre-employment checks and keep accurate records.

Managers use their links within the council to support learners who experience safeguarding issues; they place a high priority on the welfare of their learners. For example, all learning centres are part of the Safe Place in North Tyneside scheme. This means that any learner signed up to the scheme can use any of the services' venues if they feel vulnerable or anxious for any reason. Adult learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are trained by tutors to make effective use of the scheme. All learning centres are equipped with free sanitary items so that female learners do not suffer the effects of period poverty during their education and training.

Managers have invested recently in a digital application to help all learners report any safeguarding concerns or personal issues. However, this is at an early stage and at the time of the inspection it was too soon to measure its impact.

### **Inspection findings**

- Managers have continued to improve the standard of teaching by observing the teaching of staff to identify underperformance and by using coaching and sharing of good practice to effect improvement. Most tutors make lessons engaging and interesting, and learners respond well to this approach. For example, in English the teaching of verbs and conjunctions was related very effectively to making tea and planning events for national tea day. In mathematics, learners were very engaged in a group board game to revise complex GCSE topics.
- Tutors work very well with support staff and volunteers to provide well-targeted support to learners who are struggling, so that they improve their understanding and accelerate their progress. Teaching assistant apprentices benefit from

excellent individual coaching that builds their skills quickly. The vast majority of tutors make very good use of information from the assessment of learners' starting points to plan and provide learning activities that meet learners' needs. In a minority of lessons, tutors do not use their knowledge of learners' abilities to direct learning activities effectively, which slows the pace of learning for a few learners.

- Learners and apprentices receive helpful feedback in most lessons that helps them to improve their knowledge and understanding. In a small minority of lessons, tutors do not use their questioning effectively to assess or develop learners' understanding and the progress they are making. Feedback provided on learners' written work is not consistently helpful in identifying how learners can improve and fulfil their potential. For learners on study programmes, tutors do not identify grammatical errors, so learners do not improve their skills in English rapidly.
- Managers have strengthened the assessment and recording of learners' progress on courses that do not lead to qualifications. As a result, these learners have clear learning plans and the vast majority make very good progress in achieving their objectives.
- Managers have very successfully designed the study programmes to develop the skills of young people who face multiple barriers to learning and have often been excluded from school previously and involved in criminal behaviour. Managers ensure that all learners participate in excellent work experience in areas such as horticulture, cleaning, and painting and decorating. Staff and workplace supervisors build learners' confidence and vocational skills very effectively. Behaviour is excellent; learners enjoy their studies and develop good skills for working life such as teamwork. For example, learners who had finished painting a bench to a high standard helped their peers, who were struggling, to complete a task to the same high standard.
- This study programme is valued within the local community. Learners on work experience tidy the gardens of the elderly and of empty council properties, which enhances the local environment. Managers track the learners carefully as they leave the programme; a very high proportion of learners who complete the programme remain outside the criminal justice system, with many progressing to further courses or employment.
- Managers have successfully increased the proportion of apprentices who complete their programme. Tutors now track more carefully the progress that the small cohort of apprentices make so that those at risk of falling behind are identified quickly and supported effectively to be successful.
- The proportion of adult learners completing their qualifications has increased since the previous inspection and is now very high. Learners at entry level and level 1 achieve particularly well. Current adult learners are making good progress; they speak articulately about the skills they are developing and how this will help them find employment or better support their children and families.
- Adult learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress in developing their confidence and their social and personal skills. On art courses, they develop their fine motor skills well. Learners in one art lesson successfully

designed and made a boomerang after studying aboriginal culture and symbols.

- Managers record that a high proportion of adult learners progress into employment or further training, but their collection and analysis of this information is brief. As a result, managers are unable to evaluate fully the impact of the training that they provide or use the information to plan future learning opportunities. Managers have recognised this and have clear plans to improve this aspect of their work.
- Leaders and managers have a well-articulated strategy to provide a wide range of courses to meet local employers' and residents' needs. They are particularly effective at providing courses for vulnerable learners with a poor education and job history. Staff provide training to enable vulnerable learners to gain in confidence and develop the skills that they need to benefit from job opportunities in the area in, for example, health and care, digital industries, retail and hospitality. Managers respond quickly to requests for courses from their partners. For example, they have increased the number of information technology courses for learners who need to learn digital skills to access the imminent roll-out of Universal Credit.
- Learners receive good-quality, impartial careers advice and guidance. Learners on the study programme benefit from individual advice from an independent careers adviser who supports them to find courses or employment opportunities that meet their needs. Careers education is also part of the study programme curriculum and enables learners to develop effective skills in searching and applying for jobs and improving their interview skills.

### **Next steps for the provider**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to develop and implement the strategies for sharing good-quality teaching, learning and assessment practice so that all tutors:
  - provide feedback on learners' work that enables learners to improve the quality of their written work
  - use information about learners' starting points and progress to develop activities that meet the needs of all learners in the class
  - are able to question or assess learners skilfully in lessons to check that learners have fully understood
  - reinforce the dangers of radicalisation and extremism so that learners and apprentices develop a sound understanding of these risks and how they relate to their daily lives
- managers implement their plans to collect better information about what happens to adult learners on completion of their programme and use this information to evaluate the courses offered and plan future training.

I am copying this letter to the Education and Skills Funding Agency. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Rachel Angus  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Ofsted Inspectors were assisted by the senior manager, employment and skills, as nominee. We had discussions with learners and apprentices and held meetings with managers, senior leaders and councillors. We carried out observations of teaching, learning and assessment. We scrutinised key documents, including those related to safeguarding, self-assessment and quality assurance and analysed achievement and progress data.