

# Nottinghamshire Training Network

Independent learning provider

## Inspection dates

26 February–1 March 2019

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

## Summary of key findings

### This is an inadequate provider

- The principles of apprenticeship provision are not met; apprentices do not receive their entitlement to well-planned off-the-job training.
- The management of subcontractors, who deliver most programmes, is weak.
- Governance arrangements do not provide the support and challenge necessary to secure improvements in the quality of provision.
- Leaders and managers have not remedied many of the areas of weakness identified at the previous inspection.
- Apprentices make slow progress and, in many subjects, few complete their apprenticeships within agreed timescales.
- Too few learners and apprentices improve their English skills sufficiently.
- Staff do not provide careers information, advice and guidance that learners and apprentices need to plan their next steps effectively.
- Tutors do not provide enough challenge for learners and apprentices to reach their potential.

### The provider has the following strengths

- Staff provide good pastoral and personal care for learners and apprentices.
- Most trainees benefit from good work placements that help them to improve their readiness for employment.
- Apprentices develop their mathematical skills well.
- Leaders have a strong and successful commitment to making provision for adults in local communities who face barriers to taking part in training and development.

## Full report

### Information about the provider

- Nottinghamshire Training Network (NTN) is a large independent learning provider based in Mansfield. It provides apprenticeships, traineeships and adult learning programmes, both directly and through a group of subcontractors. Training is delivered in several locations, principally Nottinghamshire, County Durham, Yorkshire, London, Kent and Hampshire.
- NTN provides apprenticeships in health and social care, warehousing and distribution, customer service, management, business administration, spectator safety, construction, information technology, childcare, supporting teaching and learning in schools, hairdressing, and beauty therapy. Traineeships are concerned with occupations in retail, customer service, construction and warehousing. Adult programmes are aimed principally at out-of-work adults who need considerable help to enter the workforce and focus on information technology and customer service occupations.

### What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Examine the plans of all apprenticeship programmes to ensure that:
  - apprentices receive enough off-the-job training
  - off-the-job training is planned thoroughly
  - employers allocate time during apprentices' ordinary working hours for them to complete off-the-job training.
- Review and redesign processes for managing subcontractors so that they include, for example:
  - the use of measures that ensure subcontractors are clear about what is expected of them
  - mechanisms for regularly reviewing the progress of learners and apprentices
  - procedures for checking the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
  - NTN staff making direct contact with learners and apprentices to ensure that they know what programme they are doing, what the expectations are, and to check that they are receiving their full entitlements.
- Strengthen arrangements for governance, for example by improving the quality of performance information board members receive.
- Provide training, guidance and support to tutors so that they can:
  - help learners and apprentices to develop their English skills, especially their writing
  - recognise when learners and apprentices can achieve more and provide them with more challenging work that extends their learning.
- Ensure that all learners and apprentices receive impartial careers information, advice and guidance, regardless of which organisation provides their training.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Inadequate

- Managers do not do enough to assure the quality of subcontracted provision, much of which is not good enough. They do not make their expectations clear, and often fail to provide subcontractors with clear measures of success that reflect these expectations. They rely too much on subcontractors' own quality assurance and improvement processes, which are often ineffective.
- Managers do not have a clear picture of the number of learners and apprentices on programmes or the progress that they make. The information that subcontractors provide about the progress of learners and apprentices is unhelpful. Different subcontractors provide reports that contain different information presented in different ways. This makes it difficult for NTN managers to gain a clear picture of what is happening. Managers are unaware of the fact that many apprentices' programmes do not meet the requirements of apprenticeship provision.
- Managers do not review the quality of teaching, learning and assessment sufficiently. Consequently, they are not able to ensure that all learners and apprentices receive good-quality teaching. NTN staff only conduct lesson observations with one of the subcontractors, leaving the assessment of teaching in all other cases to subcontractor staff. Records of these observations are not evaluative enough and do not lead to clear action plans to remedy weaknesses they identify. As a result, tutors do not understand how they can improve their teaching.
- Directors and managers have failed to take effective action to implement the recommendations from the previous inspection, and from subsequent support and challenge visits. As a result, many of the weaknesses remain from the time of the previous inspection.
- Professional development of staff both within NTN and at subcontractors is not systematically planned or sufficiently well managed. Managers are unclear what, if any, professional development activity subcontractor staff undertake, or the impact this training has on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. However, NTN and subcontractor staff undertake mandatory training in safeguarding, including the 'Prevent' duty, British values, health and safety, and equality and diversity, and managers monitor this well.
- Managers do not assess the quality of provision rigorously enough and, consequently, they do not have a clear picture of the necessary improvements. The quality of self-assessment reports received from subcontractors is not consistently good. Managers at NTN do not monitor the progress subcontractors make in implementing their own quality improvement plans.
- Leaders and managers work well with local communities across the country to provide training programmes for groups of learners that would otherwise be unlikely to participate in education. They work effectively with employers to secure work placements for trainees that help to prepare them for employment. They work well within minority ethnic and other communities, to help adults who wish to enter employment and need to develop their basic English and mathematical skills. This enables adult learners to progress to higher level studies with other providers.

## The governance of the provider

- The board of directors meets regularly, but the reports that it receives from managers are not detailed enough to enable members to supervise programmes effectively. They are insufficiently aware of the progress of learners and apprentices, and they do not take effective action to support and challenge managers.
- Directors recognise the need to bolster their oversight of programmes and have recently appointed an experienced member to the board. It is too early to judge the impact of this change.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures are in place. The designated safeguarding officer has suitable qualifications and is knowledgeable about safeguarding matters. Managers carry out appropriate checks to ensure that staff are suitable for their roles. They maintain an up-to-date single central record of all staff, including those who work for subcontractors.
- Where concerns arise, staff and managers take appropriate actions and record these well. They have resolved all recent incidents satisfactorily.
- Adult learners, trainees and apprentices feel safe and have a good awareness of health and safety in the workplace. Leaders and managers ensure that staff undertake suitable risk assessments of employers' premises and training venues.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

### Inadequate

- At the time of the inspection, apprenticeship programmes accounted for the large majority of teaching, learning and assessment activity. NTN had 352 apprentices, of which 72 were on a temporary break in learning, 33 adult learners and 59 trainees.
- Tutors do not make effective use of the information they have about what apprentices already know and can do, to plan learning activities. As a result, apprentices do not develop their skills, knowledge and behaviours as well as they should. Too few tutors set work that is difficult enough for apprentices.
- Too many apprentices receive too little off-the-job training. What they receive is not well planned. Most training plans are simply a list of qualification units to be completed. Tutors give no thought to, for example, the sequencing of learning or opportunities for apprentices to practise what they have already learned.
- Trainees do not learn quickly enough because they spend much of their time completing workbooks or working online without the support they need from tutors. Tutors do not challenge trainees to develop their skills further and trainees spend too much time studying things that they already know.
- Most employers are not sufficiently involved in their apprentices' programmes. Too often they do not know how much progress their apprentices have made. They are unsure of how they can help them to further develop their skills, knowledge and behaviours in the

workplace. This contributes to the slow progress of many apprentices.

- Tutors' written feedback on marked work is not specific enough for learners to fully understand how they can improve. Tutors do not identify where learners hold misconceptions or do not have a secure grasp of topics, and are therefore unable to adjust their teaching to address these problems.
- Vocational tutors do not do enough to help learners and apprentices to develop their English skills. In addition, those who teach trainees and adult learners do not help them sufficiently with their mathematical skills. Often, tutors do not take enough account of learners' existing knowledge and do not plan lessons that help them build on this. Trainees, in particular, make slow progress in these subjects. Tutors in all provision types pay insufficient attention to the quality of learners' writing and do not provide them with the help they need to improve.
- The majority of tutors who work with trainees and adult learners make effective use of their good experience and expertise to help prepare learners for entry into the workplace. In many cases, they provide a range of activities that help learners to develop their vocational and personal skills well. For example, they provide good training in construction trades, such as bricklaying and plastering, and they help learners to develop their ability to work in teams in customer service environments. Tutors continue to make themselves available to help learners who have completed their programmes to develop their skills and find employment.
- Staff quickly identify those learners and apprentices who have special educational needs. Where necessary, they provide them with specialist individual help. Staff at both NTN and at subcontractors have appropriate links with specialist support agencies to which they refer learners if this is appropriate.
- Tutors of adults, who make up a small minority of learners, make good use of assessment test results to identify each learner's starting point and to plan activities that lead to good progress. Tutors carefully establish each adult learner's background and what they already know and can do. They measure learners' progress during sessions. Tutors use the information this provides effectively to modify their teaching.
- Adult learning tutors carefully integrate equality and diversity themes within lessons using current affairs and local community events to make topics relevant and interesting to learners. As a result, the large majority of adult learners develop a good understanding of these themes.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Requires improvement

- Staff do not provide enough information to help learners and apprentices make clear and sensible decisions about their next steps in education and employment. Trainees, who follow a programme intended to prepare them for work, receive very little guidance from their tutors, and few are helped to consider progression to apprenticeships. Apprentices receive too little guidance before they join their programmes. Many do not understand that they are apprentices, or the significance of different aspects of their programmes. Although tutors talk to adult learners about careers, these discussions are limited in scope and detail.
- Tutors do not consistently develop trainees' and apprentices' understanding of topics that

will help them participate fully as citizens of modern Britain. Although staff include topics related to British values within induction activities, these themes are not reinforced throughout learners' programmes. As a result, many learners are unable to recall much detail about these topics.

- The attendance of many trainees and adult learners is not as high as it needs to be for them to sustain paid employment. In other respects, trainees and adult learners develop appropriate behaviours for work. However, apprentices are not always clear about the particular behaviours they need to develop to be successful in their roles.
- Learners feel and are safe in learning venues and workplaces. They have a general understanding of risks they may encounter and how they should deal with these. They know to whom they should report concerns. However, their understanding of the dangers of extremism and the risks of radicalisation varies considerably.
- Learners of all types take pride in their work and grow in confidence because of their studies. Staff work well with adult learners to help them to overcome significant barriers to participation in education and to rebuild their self-esteem. For example, they have designed a programme that uses computer games to engage hard-to-reach adults and bring them back into learning. This programme helps learners to build their confidence and self-esteem, and helps to raise their morale. As a result, learners are much more confident in attending learning sessions, and working and communicating with their peers. Staff help trainees who have had poor school experiences to regain their enthusiasm for learning and they help apprentices to understand and value their own contributions to the workplace.
- Staff offer high levels of care and support to learners and apprentices. Where learners suffer from mental ill health, for example, staff work flexibly to support them to remain engaged in their programmes.
- Trainees benefit from appropriate work placements that help them to prepare for entry to employment. They work in a variety of roles in which they develop their abilities to work as a team member, to communicate with others and to deal with problems.

## Outcomes for learners

## Inadequate

- The progress of most apprentices is too slow and, in several subject areas, most fail to achieve their qualifications within agreed timescales. Although the proportion who eventually achieve has been in line with other providers, there is wide variation between different subcontractors and in different subject areas. Achievement rates are particularly low in spectator safety, administration and business management. Although managers have stopped working with several underperforming subcontractors, just over a half of current apprentices are behind schedule in their studies.
- Managers are unclear about what happens to apprentices when they complete their programmes. Although they collect information about the destinations of apprentices, managers do not understand what it means.
- Adults who take short employability programmes and basic English and mathematics qualifications develop their knowledge and skills well and a high proportion achieve their qualifications. Most trainees develop their knowledge and understanding of a range of vocational topics well. In these subjects, they make at least the progress that might be

expected, given their starting points, and they achieve their qualifications. However, few trainees develop their English and mathematical skills quickly enough and, consequently, few achieve qualifications in these subjects.

- Most learners and apprentices produce written work that at least meets the minimum requirements of their programmes and the industries in which they work or aspire to work. However, staff do not set challenging targets for learners that help them to exceed these requirements and work to their full potential. Apprentices develop practical skills that enable them to contribute effectively within their workplaces.
- The majority of adult learners and trainees progress to positive destinations, including employment and further study. However, few trainees move on to apprenticeships and staff do too little to promote this form of training.
- The small number of younger apprentices, apprentices from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, and those who have special educational needs achieve less well than others. Managers have not undertaken any analysis of the reasons for this and, consequently, they have not acted to improve the achievements of these groups of apprentices.

## Types of provision

### Adult learning programmes

**Good**

- NTN offers a range of programmes for employed and unemployed adults. There were 33 learners at the time of the inspection, taking qualifications in employability, information technology (IT), and the safe handling of medicines. NTN has provided programmes for 243 adults since the beginning of August.
- Leaders and managers work effectively with a range of stakeholders in various locations across England to provide programmes that support adults who must overcome significant obstacles to return to learning. As a result, many who otherwise would have little prospect of studying or gaining employment find themselves able to do so.
- The vast majority of tutors have high expectations for learners and plan teaching and learning activities that meet their needs. Tutors use their expertise appropriately to plan lessons thoroughly, and to set suitable tasks that they often relate to learners' personal or work-related interests. Most learners enjoy their programmes, are well motivated and develop their skills well. However, learners studying employability programmes do not develop their skills sufficiently. For example, most do not practise their interview skills enough for them to become confident to apply for work.
- Small group sizes, approachable and caring tutors, and an informal but professional atmosphere in lessons make it easy for learners, many of whom lack confidence, to participate fully in a range of activities. Tutors provide high levels of individual support and help learners to overcome personal problems, such as anxiety. As a result, learners gain the confidence they need to think about their next steps, which many have previously found difficult. Learners with complex needs develop their personal and social skills particularly well.
- Learners produce work that is well presented, organised and at least meets the

requirements of their qualifications. They are proud of what they produce. For example, IT learners use their new skills to produce posters and leaflets.

- Learners from diverse backgrounds demonstrate appropriate levels of respect between each other and for their tutors. For example, they listen with interest to the opinions of their peers and demonstrate awareness of the sensitivities of others when participating in group discussions.
- Most learners develop a sound knowledge of British values and can relate these well to their everyday lives. They understand the risks of extremism and know how to recognise the signs that someone is becoming radicalised. They know to whom they should report concerns.
- Tutors check learners' understanding of key topics well. They set and mark written tasks frequently. Tutors provide clear oral feedback that helps learners to improve the quality of their work. Learners appreciate these evaluations and are keen to act upon feedback. Where it becomes clear that a learner's understanding is incomplete, tutors provide effective one-to-one coaching that helps them to catch up. However, tutors often do not set more challenging work for those learners who make steady progress.
- Tutors do not make enough use of information about learners' English and mathematical skills to plan vocational lessons that support learners to develop their knowledge of these subjects. As a result, few learners other than those who take English and mathematics qualifications increase their expertise in these key areas. A high proportion of learners are unclear about the extent to which they need to develop their English and mathematics skills. Many of these learners do not know what they need to improve to increase their chances of securing and sustaining employment.

## Apprenticeships

## Inadequate

- NTN has 352 apprentices, mostly taught by subcontractors. They follow a mix of standards and frameworks in health and social care, warehousing and distribution, customer service, management, business administration, spectator safety, construction, information technology, childcare, supporting teaching and learning in schools, hairdressing, and beauty therapy.
- The principles and requirements of apprenticeship programmes are not met. Staff do not plan clear and coherent programmes of learning. In too many cases, apprentices undertake far too little off-the-job training. Many employers fail to provide time during working hours for apprentices to complete learning activities.
- Tutors do not produce detailed training plans for apprentices. Plans are often simply lists of qualification units for the apprentice to complete, with no indication of how or when they are to complete them. Staff do not take apprentices' starting points into account when planning programmes, and do not consistently check subsequent improvements in their skills and behaviours. Apprentices only have a vague idea of what they need to improve and whether they are improving. They have a very limited understanding of how staff measure changes in their behaviours.
- Managers and staff do not engage employers in all aspects of apprentices' training. Too few employers participate fully in reviews of apprentices' progress and in the setting of meaningful targets that ensure their apprentices are well motivated and develop their

skills and knowledge rapidly. A few employers have a better understanding of apprenticeship programmes and give their apprentices enough support to ensure that they succeed.

- The initial information, advice and guidance that staff provide for apprentices is frequently ineffective. Apprentices often do not understand that they are on an apprenticeship programme. They are often unclear about the significance of the behaviours they need to develop. In a few cases, they do not understand the importance of the functional skills qualifications they undertake. However, most apprentices who take standards programmes understand the format of their final assessments.
- Leaders and managers do not monitor sufficiently the progress apprentices make. They do not know why apprentices are making slow progress, or even whether they have withdrawn from learning. Too many apprentices who study with subcontractors do not understand the role that NTN plays in their apprenticeship. They do not have ready access to NTN's managers and cannot contact them to express concerns or resolve problems.
- Tutors and assessors use their good industry knowledge and experience to provide training that enables apprentices to develop the necessary knowledge to undertake their job roles. Although they develop their skills slowly, the standard of apprentices' practical on-the-job work usually reaches the level expected of them. For example, one apprentice has successfully improved his project management knowledge and understanding of promotion and marketing. This knowledge is a benefit to the employer and improves the apprentice's employability. Most assessors ensure that apprentices know precisely what to do to improve their performance, following assessment in the workplace.
- Apprentices develop mathematical skills well. For example, health and social care apprentices use ratios and conversions of measurements well when dealing with the medication their clients need. Many level two apprentices study mathematics at a level higher than they need to for their apprenticeship. However, apprentices do not improve their writing skills sufficiently. One reason for this is that tutors often do not identify errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar, or provide guidance to help apprentices to structure their work better.
- Apprentices feel safe and work safely in the workplace. They understand and abide by regulations designed to keep them and those around them safe from harm. Most apprentices understand safeguarding and know to whom they should report concerns. However, not all apprentices understand the dangers and signs of radicalisation and extremism. Although staff cover British values during induction sessions, they do not revisit them throughout apprentices' programmes. As a result, apprentices do not develop a strong grasp of these topics.

## Traineeships

## Requires improvement

- Of the 59 current trainees, the largest numbers train in retail, construction, warehousing and business administration. Trainees attend lessons in NTN's own provision in Nottingham, and in subcontracted provision in Kent, West London and County Durham.
- Attendance in lessons is not good enough. Many trainees face obstacles to attendance such as the distance they must travel to attend lessons and a lack of understanding of the

world of work. Nevertheless, staff have not been effective in improving trainees' attendance.

- Tutors do not make trainees work hard enough in lessons. Too many trainees find work too easy and do not fully understand what they need to do to improve their skills and knowledge.
- The feedback that tutors provide on marked work is not good enough to help trainees improve. Too often, it is overly focused on meeting qualification requirements and, as a result, trainees are not fully aware of what they need to do to improve specific aspects of their work.
- Too many trainees do not develop their English and mathematics skills quickly enough. Teachers of English and mathematics do not take enough account of trainees' existing experience and consequently many trainees do not make the progress expected of them. Trainees complete standard workbooks or online tasks, irrespective of their individual needs, and staff leave them for extended periods without support. This frustrates trainees and results in them repeating work and making only slow progress. Too many trainees do not understand which aspects of their English and mathematical skills they need to improve.
- Staff do not provide most trainees with the guidance and advice they need to fully consider their next steps. Too few trainees have sufficient awareness of the options available to them, and too few move on to apprenticeships. However, employer representatives speak to construction trainees to explain different trades and to demonstrate progression routes to management or self-employment.
- Staff develop a good understanding of the needs of trainees and plan programmes for individuals tailored to specific vocational areas. They make good use of relevant qualifications to recognise trainees' achievements in important areas such as personal development, employability, and health and safety in the construction environment.
- Tutors develop positive relationships with trainees in well-managed and well-resourced lessons that have clear objectives that trainees understand. Tutors use their experience and teaching skills effectively to motivate trainees and most make the progress expected of them and produce work to meet required standards.
- Staff work well with employers to secure meaningful and effective work experience for trainees. These work experience placements help trainees to develop appropriate vocational, behavioural and personal skills. Trainees develop skills in areas such as visual merchandising, serving customers and taking payment, amending job descriptions, organising meetings, and supporting warehouse operations.
- Tutors provide good pastoral support that helps trainees to overcome barriers to learning. Pastoral support often extends to the provision of food, clothes and help with other social needs. This has been key to ensure that trainees make progress and participate effectively in work experience. Staff work well with outside agencies to assist trainees with issues like homelessness, transport, and difficulties in caring for other family members.
- Trainees are attentive and well-behaved in lessons. They show respect for staff and each other and accept peoples' individual differences. They work well together on the completion of group tasks. This helps them to develop their team-working skills in preparation for employment.

## Provider details

Unique reference number	58161
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	787
Principal/CEO	Syed Jafery
Telephone number	01623 404341
Website	<a href="http://www.ntn.org.uk">www.ntn.org.uk</a>

## 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)	-	13	-	20	-	-	-	-
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	4	143	4	185	-	16		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	25		34		59			
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:	Inspire and Educate Limited JC Training QDOS Training Limited Vista Training Solutions Limited Links2work Limited Optimum Skills Limited East Kent ITeC Limited							

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of quality and compliance, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual 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

Russ Henry, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Bob Hamp	Her Majesty's Inspector
Ralph Brompton	Ofsted Inspector
Kevin Dowson	Ofsted Inspector
Maureen Deary	Ofsted Inspector
Christine Blowman	Ofsted Inspector
Derek Williams	Ofsted Inspector
Maria Rayworth	Ofsted Inspector

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