

Inspection of Digital Telecoms Network Academy Limited

Inspection dates: 17–20 September 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Adult learning programmes	Good
Apprenticeships	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Information about this provider

Cablecom Training Limited, now trading as Digital Telecoms Network Academy (DTN), was established in 2000 and concentrates on training individuals for roles and employment in the telecommunications sector. It is based in Stockton-on-Tees. At the time of the inspection, DTN had 26 learners on adult learning programmes and 53 learners on apprenticeship frameworks. Almost all apprentices were over the age of 19. Leaders offer a wide range of apprenticeships and courses specific to the telecommunications sector in subjects such as engineering and information and communications technology.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Learners and apprentices swiftly gain new skills, knowledge and behaviours that prepare them well for their future careers in the telecommunications sector. They benefit from a curriculum that is planned and delivered effectively and that enables them to build on their previous understanding, improve their confidence levels, and develop their technical understanding.

Adult learners achieve their qualifications well. Many learners are successful in gaining employment on completion of their studies. They benefit from effective feedback and support on how to improve their skills, knowledge and understanding.

Apprentices make good progress and make valuable contributions to their employers' businesses. They quickly become part of a team and demonstrate a meaningful understanding of the telecommunications infrastructure and the skills required to be employed in the sector.

Adult learners and apprentices enjoy their time with DTN, and this is reflected in their positive attitude to learning and their high levels of good behaviour. Learners and apprentices feel safe and are safe while attending their course and completing their apprenticeships.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders provide a range of courses and programmes that are carefully designed to meet the diverse needs of learners and employers in the telecommunications sector. For example, they ensure that new technological advances, such as the introduction of 5G and air blown fibre optic cabling, are an integral part of the curriculum for both adult learners and apprentices. They work effectively with large national employers to ensure that learners are well prepared for employment on completion of their course.

Tutors are highly skilled and knowledgeable in telecommunications. They use their knowledge and understanding effectively to plan and deliver the curriculum. They sequence activities carefully to enable learners to build on their existing knowledge. For example, tutors ensure that learners and apprentices are able to understand and install copper cabling before they move on to more complex tasks with fibre optics. As a result, learners and apprentices take on more intricate tasks and swiftly gain the skills, knowledge and behaviours expected in the telecommunications sector.

Tutors provide effective one-to-one support, guidance and feedback continuously to enable learners and apprentices to achieve their potential. They enable learners and apprentices to improve their skills in practical and theory sessions. Learners confidently apply their theoretical understanding to their practical work. They also use their practical learning effectively to understand better the principles of, for example, installing broadband lines and the associated problems that could occur during this process.

Tutors use assessment well to determine learners' and apprentices' knowledge and skills at the start of their programmes. They use this information to measure accurately the skills and knowledge that learners and apprentices acquire and their progress. Tutors use questioning effectively to evaluate and build on what learners and apprentices know and can do. For example, tutors challenge apprentices to improve their mathematics skills in measuring fibre optic cables and calculating the cost of materials for their jobs. Adult learners develop their fault-finding expertise in the splicing of fibre optic cables.

Leaders provide effective careers advice and guidance to learners and apprentices. Consequently, learners and apprentices have a good understanding of the wide variety of careers and promotions within the telecommunications sector. This helps them make informed choices about their futures and gain employment at the end of their programmes.

Tutors work effectively with adult learners to help them to improve their chances of employment. They provide helpful and meaningful advice on effective interview techniques and how to complete job applications. Learners who have additional needs receive effective support to enable them to access all of the curriculum and to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding to the same level as their peers. As a result, they remain on their programmes and achieve their qualifications.

Leaders and tutors have high expectations of learners' and apprentices' behaviours. All staff promote and model good conduct, which learners and apprentices adopt well. Learners and apprentices behave with respect and show tolerance to others at all times, while demonstrating a professional approach to their future or current job roles. They attend well, turn up on time and are keen to learn.

DTN is well led and managed. Leaders work effectively with employers to ensure that the curriculum meets their needs and those of the rapidly developing telecommunications sector. Leaders work very closely and effectively with Jobcentre Plus. For example, in conjunction with Jobcentre Plus, leaders provide additional qualifications and experiences, such as working in confined spaces and first aid at work, that benefit learners seeking employment in the telecommunications sector. Leaders make sure that learners in disadvantaged communities and those who are unemployed can access training that helps to improve their employment prospects and has a positive social impact.

Senior leaders have a good understanding of the quality of their provision. They have worked highly effectively with staff to review and plan the curriculum and have a good oversight of the quality of education and the financial position of the organisation.

Leaders have not ensured that tutors have the specific skills to help learners and apprentices improve the standard of their written English skills. For example, tutors are not sufficiently competent in helping apprentices produce high-quality records of jobs that they have completed or use the correct grammar in emails to customers and colleagues.

Leaders and staff do not sufficiently focus on ensuring that learners and apprentices have a sound understanding of the risks posed by extremist groups and possible radicalisation.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that arrangements for keeping learners and apprentices safe are secure and in place. Staff are aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding learners. The designated safeguarding lead and staff are all suitably trained and kept appropriately updated on a regular basis. Learners and apprentices are safe at the academy and in their work settings. They know how to and to whom they should report any concerns and trust that staff will deal with these promptly.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Support tutors to improve their confidence and ability to help learners and apprentices improve the standard of their written English.
- Ensure that learners and apprentices improve their understanding of the risks presented by those with radical or extremist views and know how to protect themselves and others from such risks.

Provider details

Unique reference number	50949
Address	1 Wylam Court Westland Way Preston Farm Industrial Estate Stockton-on-Tees TS18 3FB
Contact number	01642 804000
Website	www.dtnacademy.com
Director	Mr R Fraser
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	April 2016
Main subcontractors	N/A

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the operations director, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the further education and skills inspection handbook and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

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