

# Northern Care Training Limited

Independent learning provider

## Inspection dates

21–24 March 2017

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

## Summary of key findings

### This is an outstanding provider

- Leaders, managers and training advisers have very high ambitions for learners; as a result, learners make very good progress.
- Learners are highly motivated; they rapidly improve their confidence, skills and knowledge, owing to the challenging and supportive teaching provided by well-qualified teachers and trainers.
- Leaders create a strong culture of respect, trust and delegation among managers and staff that supports the relentless pursuit of improvement.
- Leaders and managers implement a highly effective cycle of continuous improvement which has resulted in outstanding provision.
- Leaders, managers and the board of directors understand and meet the needs of the communities they serve exceptionally well.
- Staff monitor the progress of all learners very closely and promptly support any who are at risk of falling behind.
- Staff place a strong focus on developing learners' skills in English and mathematics; as a result, most learners achieve functional skills qualifications in these subjects at the first attempt.
- Apprentices work to high professional standards, and adult learners gain excellent work-related skills that help the majority to enter paid employment.
- Learners benefit from a wide range of enrichment activities that support local charities and promote British values.
- Staff set challenging and specific targets so that learners understand what they need to do to improve, and how to make those improvements.
- Training advisers plan and carry out assessment and review sessions exceptionally well.
- Staff assess the needs and aspirations of learners thoroughly when they start the programme and plan the work to meet those needs.
- Learners benefit from very good information, advice and guidance.

## **Full report**

### **Information about the provider**

- Northern Care Training (NCT) is one of two companies making up the Profound Group. These two companies share a board of directors and senior managers, but maintain separate contracts and teaching and training staff.
- NCT is situated in Peterlee, near Sunderland. Most apprentices are situated in the North East of England, but NCT also offers programmes for unemployed adults in Luton, Birmingham, South Yorkshire and Northampton, and a subcontracted programme in art and design in London. The company also has a small traineeship programme, but no trainees were on programmes at the time of inspection.
- The North East has the highest unemployment rate in the United Kingdom, and fewer people with qualifications at level 4 and above compared with national rates.

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

- Maintain the strong focus on helping learners to achieve their full potential and make excellent progress towards their aspirations; continue to monitor carefully progress towards improvements, and to assess the impact of the steps taken.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Outstanding

- Leaders and managers set high and ambitious targets for achievement and standards; they have met many of these targets and are well on the way to achieving the rest. Very good and frequent communication between board members, managers and staff, including subcontractor staff, ensures that everyone understands what is expected of them and knows that their work is valued.
- Managers create an ethos of trust in their staff's ability, and they delegate responsibility to staff to create systems that work well to benefit learners. For example, a group of staff who carry out the observation of teaching, learning and assessment were particularly successful in their task of improving the observation process. Managers and staff closely monitor the impact of any new measures so that they can be sure that they lead to improvements in learners' experience, progress and outcomes.
- Managers constantly monitor the steps they have taken to improve the quality of provision, making any necessary adjustments to ensure that improvements are effective and sustainable. They have successfully tackled all weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. For example, trainers now set specific and challenging targets for learners so that they make very good progress.
- Leaders and managers accurately assess the quality of provision, making good use of data, including the views of all stakeholders and the subcontractor. Managers and trainers self-assess termly their progress towards agreed targets, and make any identified improvements before the end-of-year report. The quality improvement plan that accompanies it is particularly well-focused on improvements to learners' experience, and is updated regularly. Managers do not identify improvements as complete until they can show a quantifiable and substantial benefit to learners and other stakeholders.
- Learners benefit from the very high priority that managers give to the development of mathematics and English. A functional skills team creates excellent resources for trainers, including those of the subcontractor, and provides very good support to learners identified as needing it. These actions result in very high first-time achievement of functional skills qualifications.
- Managers have excellent links with employers, local employment partnerships and the communities in all the localities in which they work. They maintain a high rate of repeat business and a successful strategy for engaging further employers. They work very effectively with community projects in educationally disadvantaged areas across the country; they use these links to provide excellent enrichment opportunities and to ensure that learners have a good understanding of British values.
- Managers evaluate and improve the work of staff very effectively. As a result, teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding. When recruiting new staff, managers test the skills of applicants in teaching, learning, marking work, and giving constructive feedback to learners. Training advisers for apprentices meet individually with their managers at least every two months to ensure that they challenge their apprentices to make good progress. Managers who observe teaching, learning and assessment evaluate the progress made by all learners in a particular trainer's cohort, as well as in the session seen.

- Staff and learners, including those in the subcontracted provision, benefit from a very well-planned range of relevant and often innovative professional development activities. These are based on the individual needs of staff that are identified in the regular meetings with their managers, from the outcomes of observations and annual appraisals, and on national priorities.
- Staff promote equality of opportunity very well. They design resources and plan programmes so that they meet the individual needs of learners. They make programmes relevant to the specific occupational settings and job descriptions of apprentices, so that all apprentices are able to produce well-informed work. Data is interrogated regularly to ensure that no differences exist in achievement between groups of learners.
- Managers and staff promote tolerance and respect for others well throughout the company. At induction, all staff explore and understand the difference between equality and diversity. British values and trainers' responsibility under the 'Prevent' duty are explained very well in a video that staff made to show how easily radicalisation could occur in a classroom setting should a teacher take no remedial action at the first signs of discontent. Learners have a very good understanding of the diverse needs of those with whom they work and the wider community.

### **The governance of the provider**

- The board of directors, made up of four members of the family who own the company and a very experienced external director, know their staff, learners and the areas they work in very well. Directors challenge each other very effectively to stay focused on the key business of giving learners an excellent experience. They are all committed to helping the local communities in which they work, and are very well prepared to meet new policy and funding challenges.
- Directors receive frequent reports that accurately evaluate the progress being made towards the very ambitious strategic aims, and take prompt action to maintain a rapid rate of progress. They communicate regularly with their staff, both formally and informally, so that they can understand and respond to their feedback.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The company is fully compliant with safeguarding legislation.
- Staff responsible for safeguarding have very good links with local safeguarding officers in each area in which they work. They take prompt and effective action when learners report issues, and they ensure that learners and staff understand how to protect themselves online and at work.
- Safeguarding, along with the 'Prevent' duty, equality, diversity and British values, are discussed at the monthly meeting of the 'Pro-Tection group'. This group ensures that new information is disseminated in house and to the subcontractor. The group is also responsible for choosing the 'hot topics', which are social, ethical or political issues to be discussed at reviews and in learning sessions to increase learners' awareness of the world in which they live.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Outstanding

- All staff have exceedingly high expectations of what their learners can achieve. They make highly effective use of their own very good subject knowledge and experience to provide interesting and relevant activities that motivate learners well. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding, ensuring that all learners gain new skills and make excellent progress from their starting points.
- Training advisers provide very effective help; as a result, apprentices enjoy learning and are successful. Apprentices fully understand what they have to do to complete the different aspects of their apprenticeship programme. Training advisers break down complex tasks into achievable stages, ensuring that apprentices incrementally acquire very good levels of new knowledge and skills. For example, apprentices on health and social care programmes prepare very good individual care plans for people who need support; they also respond well to the challenge of finding ways of promoting the independence of these clients.
- Learners have very clear and challenging achievement targets that motivate them to do very well and to reach their full potential. Targets for apprentices take full account of their wider learning aims and career goals. For example, health and social care apprentices who are interested in becoming nurses have targets to explore university entry requirements, and then to plan what they need to do to gain the correct entry qualifications. Training advisers review learners' progress frequently and take prompt and effective action to help learners who are at risk of falling behind.
- Training advisers plan and carry out their visits and assessments particularly effectively to ensure that they meet the expectations of employers and the individual needs of learners. They set work that is matched very well to learners' different needs and abilities. Homework and additional reading tasks ensure that many learners receive a very good level of challenge that keeps them motivated and interested in making even more progress. Adult learners studying for qualifications to help meet university entry requirements receive very effective support to maintain good levels of knowledge and motivation as they prepare for their examinations.
- Training advisers provide highly effective support for learners to improve their English skills. They correct errors in spoken and written English routinely, and help learners to develop good oral communication skills through discussions. Training advisers use very good activities that ensure that learners continue to improve their skills independently, such as proofreading for accuracy and how to research topics.
- Training advisers ensure that learners make exceptional progress in improving their mathematical skills through activities which are often directly related to their chosen subject. This helps learners to improve skills in budgeting, numeracy and financial planning. For example, trainees calculate the cost of providing and preparing a meal for a small group of people.
- Employers work particularly effectively with training advisers to provide learners with high-quality feedback on their work. This makes sure that learners have a very good understanding of the progress they are making and what they need to do to improve their work.
- Staff and learners make very good use of information and communication technology

(ICT) to help learners submit work on time, communicate with staff, and find relevant information about their subject. For example, health and social care apprentices have access to health promotion material online, and early years learners can locate the early years foundation stage profiles for assessing the skills of children in their workplace.

- Support for learners is outstanding. Staff identify learners' support and additional learning needs quickly and accurately through very thorough initial assessment; they then provide high-quality and effective learning support to help learners achieve as well as they can. Adult learners, many of whom suffer from severe disadvantage or have very low educational starting points, receive exceptional support to enable them to progress successfully in their career in ways that transform their lives. Learners enjoy their studies and respond well to the very good standard of teaching and resources provided by staff.
- Thorough and comprehensive induction procedures ensure that learners are well-prepared for their programmes. Staff tailor learning opportunities to meet their individual needs and to challenge them to achieve their potential. Training advisers monitor learners' progress regularly and set challenging but realistic targets to enable learners to keep motivated, work hard and achieve success.
- Training advisers place a very high priority on ensuring that all learners have a good understanding of the importance of equality, and an awareness of diversity, as key aspects of life in modern Britain. Learners are curious about different cultures and demonstrate high levels of respect for those around them. Staff are very good role models and use their knowledge and experience highly effectively to help learners discuss and share their different experiences. For example, learners debate the cultural, moral and legal perspectives of female genital mutilation. Childcare apprentices develop a good understanding about the advantages of early help and support to ensure that all children receive a good start to their education.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Outstanding

- Learners are highly motivated and committed to developing their skills and knowledge. Trainers are particularly effective in giving learners precise feedback on how to improve their confidence in learning independently, which increases learners' potential to make good progress in the future.
- Learners gain excellent work skills. Unemployed adults develop very good behaviour, such as appropriate dress and punctuality, as well as much improved communication and numerical skills and, as a result, a high number enter employment. Construction trainees gain their licence to work on building sites during induction so that they can fully participate in employment. All trainees have a mentor from the employer to support them through their work experience.
- Apprentices contribute greatly to their businesses as demonstrated by the promotions and extra responsibilities that they are given by their employers. For example, early years apprentices rapidly gain a high level of confidence in working with others; they are able to rise to the challenge of taking personal responsibility for decisions in a nursery setting. Kitchen services apprentices improve their practical work skills to professional standards.
- Employers support their apprentices very well. They liaise closely with training advisers and ensure that learners have appropriate opportunities to enhance their skills and

knowledge. Trainees' work placements are well planned through particularly effective liaison between staff and employers. In most workplace settings, learners are able to progress to further training and qualifications.

- Learners behave well, and the vast majority attend learning sessions regularly and punctually.
- Learners are encouraged successfully to develop their wider skills beyond the requirements of their qualifications, particularly in English, mathematics and ICT. Many apprentices take additional qualifications, such as infection control, that further enhance their vocational competence. The vast majority of adults are supported to exceed the qualification requirements.
- Learners benefit from very effective information, advice and guidance that help them to make informed choices about employment and further studies. An increasing number of training advisers hold a professional qualification in information, advice and guidance, and are able to provide helpful advice and encouragement to their learners. Learners have access to professional and well-informed careers advice throughout their programme. Adult learners receive very effective individual guidance and support; as a result, a high number progress to paid employment or higher education.
- Learners feel safe and know who to contact if they have concerns. They have a very good understanding of health and safety in the workplace. Learners gain substantial knowledge and appreciation of contemporary social issues and the dangers of extremism and radicalisation. Trainers reinforce this understanding through the use of detailed and thought-provoking questions at each visit for apprentices, and regularly in lessons for adult learners and trainees.
- Learners take part in an exceptionally wide range of enrichment activities that help the communities in which they live, including voluntary work and fundraising events. For example, trainees take part in 'afternoon tea' with their teachers, an activity aimed at developing their social and moral perspectives in life. Along with the regular discussion of 'hot topics', themed around equality and diversity, social justice and British values, these activities enable learners to consider how they fit into and relate to the world around them.

## Outcomes for learners

## Outstanding

- Current learners make very good progress from their starting points because managers monitor their progress carefully and frequently, and take prompt action when learners are at risk of falling behind. Advanced-level apprentices in health and social care, where the achievement rate was low in 2015/16, are now making good progress towards their qualifications and are well on track to complete within the planned timeframe.
- The level of achievement of most learners is high, and shows an upward trend. For example, achievement of apprentices on intermediate-level programmes in health and social care was low in 2014/15, but is now markedly high as a result of very well focused actions to support those at risk of not achieving.
- Achievement rates for adult learners on the preparation for life and work programme fell in 2015/16, largely as a result of poor outcomes in subcontractors' provision. These contracts are now terminated. In the current year, a high proportion of adults, most of



whom were previously workless and required to attend a preparation for life and work programme by Jobcentre Plus, have gained paid employment.

- The first-time pass rate for functional skills mathematics and English for all learners is very high. All learners take functional skills at the level above that at which they are assessed at the start of their programme. Apprentices' first-time pass rates are particularly high, including for level 1 and 2 mathematics and English both in 2015/16 and during the current year. The first-time pass rates in mathematics at entry level and level 1 for adult learners on the preparation for life and work programme are high. The small number of adult learners who take level 1 and level 2 English qualifications achieve the qualification, although not enough pass at their first attempt.
- Apprentices work to a high professional standard; they consistently maintain the dignity of those for whom they care, and treat them with respect. Adult learners achieve the skills and confidence to gain employment and university places; they acquire useful skills to help them learn independently and contribute to their communities and in their home lives. For example, through developing skills in English and mathematics, they are better able to help their children with homework.
- Managers monitor the destination of learners well. Most apprentices progressed into employment during 2015/16, and have done so similarly in this year so far. This good progression reflects both the standard of apprentices' work and the careful alignment of vocational training with local employment needs. A high proportion of adult learners on the level 3 art and design programme with the subcontractor have gained places at their first-choice university.
- Diligent monitoring of data by managers leads to prompt action if differences in achievement begin to appear between groups of learners. No significant gaps exist in the achievement of different groups.

## Types of provision

### Adult learning programmes

### Outstanding

- Adult learning programmes have two strands. Programmes at level 2 and below cater mostly for unemployed learners who are required to attend by Jobcentre Plus in educationally disadvantaged areas in the North East, South Yorkshire, Luton, Birmingham and Northampton. A subcontractor runs a level 3 art and design programme.
- Learners' progress and achievement so far this year have improved markedly. Progress is now very good and the achievement rate is high for adult learners on the preparation for life and work programme. Managers now offer this programme as part of their direct delivery because of the low achievement in 2015/16 for learners on the subcontracted provision. In the current year around two thirds of learners have entered paid employment. Learners on the level 3 art and design programme also make good progress and achieve well.
- Initial and diagnostic assessment is particularly rigorous. Teachers understand the starting points of learners very well, and they place learners on the right programme at the right level. As a result, learners rapidly gain in confidence and self-esteem, and high numbers achieve their aspirations.



- Vocational teachers have excellent industrial experience and use it well to enthuse learners with anecdotes and relevant examples. They enliven lessons with skilful and interesting demonstrations. For example, they use three-dimensional projections in art and design lessons that are particularly effective in enabling learners to make very good progress and produce work of a high standard.
- Learners develop very good spoken English skills through participating in debates and discussions. As a result, they extend their levels of articulacy and confidence, and acquire a deep understanding of their sector area.
- Teachers provide excellent and extensive support to learners that enables them to make good progress from their initial starting points and complete their programmes successfully. The majority of learners have experienced significant barriers to learning; many have a history of exclusion from education and ongoing personal challenges. The wide range of well-targeted support for these learners includes provision of emergency housing, introductions to food banks, and appointments with agencies to provide specialist counselling and advice for sexual health.
- Very often, learners on preparing for life and work programmes have low attendance at the start of programmes, but the intervention and support that they receive results in a significant improvement in attendance. This improvement further enhances learners' ability to gain and maintain paid employment.
- Teachers promote mathematical skills very well in lessons. Teachers consistently plan mathematics into course schemes of work. Learners, many of whom enter the programme with few or no qualifications, benefit from learning these skills in contexts relevant to their life and work. Learners extend their mathematical skills and the first-time pass rates on functional skills mathematics courses are high.
- Learners are very positive about their learning. They understand the value of completing programmes for their future careers. They are very well-motivated and proud of their attainment and achievements.
- Learners develop good employability skills and attributes, in particular self-confidence, and this results in a high level of progression into employment and, for those on level 3 courses, to higher education. Learners develop their ability to use computers and work with other groups through the internet and by email.
- Learners are particularly knowledgeable about their rights and responsibilities, equality and fairness, and how to keep themselves safe. They gain a very useful understanding about online risks and how to protect themselves and their families. Learners feel safe and are well aware of the process to follow should they have concerns or wish to make a disclosure about a safeguarding issue.
- Teachers plan the promotion of British values well in schemes of work, and they implement these plans successfully in lessons. They help learners to see the relevance of these values and related topics to global events and, in particular, help them to develop their understanding of the importance of democracy. Learners display very good behaviour and demonstrate an understanding of the need to be tolerant of other views. They are respectful to staff and each other, and can explain the importance of tolerance in employment and in the wider community.

## Apprenticeships

## Outstanding

- At the time of inspection, 197 apprentices were on programmes in health and social care, child development, and well-being, with 95 studying at intermediate level, 85 at advanced level and 17 taking higher apprenticeships. At intermediate level, 40 apprentices were taking programmes in hospitality and catering, and cleaning and support service skills. Four were taking business programmes. All but 17 apprentices are adults. All are located with employers across the North East.
- Apprenticeships are very well-planned and managed. They meet the current principles and requirements of an apprenticeship, and employers allow the apprentices sufficient time for off-the-job training. Training advisers plan assessments and reviews particularly well so that they make the best use of the time they have with apprentices. On the few occasions where apprentices have to cancel sessions as a result of work difficulties, assessors ensure that they are able to catch up with their studies rapidly. Apprentices have an excellent understanding of how to improve; as a result, current apprentices make very good progress on both theory and practical courses and are very well prepared for their next steps.
- Leaders are ambitious for apprentices to succeed. They forge highly positive relationships with employers which enable them to select those parts of the apprenticeship framework that best meet employers' needs and apprentices' aspirations. As a result, training meets the needs and interests of employers' businesses and employees exceptionally well. For example, employers who need to develop their staff to take up senior posts in health and social care teams require apprentices to take modules in dealing with medicine. Leaders and managers ensure that these modules are provided.
- Training advisers are highly knowledgeable about, and experienced in, their vocational areas. They very effectively use their knowledge and experience to develop the skills and understanding of their apprentices. For example, they are stringent in ensuring that apprentices understand how to dispose of hazardous waste, and how to be more efficient in food preparation areas.
- Apprentices respond well to the high expectations of their training advisers, and as a result they develop professional standards of skills and practice. They are confident in their work environments, and are well-motivated and positive about their learning. As a result, an increasing number of apprentices choose to progress from intermediate-level to advanced-level programmes. Current apprentices are making very good progress.
- Apprentices show professional attitudes and make a valuable contribution to their employers' businesses. They understand and demonstrate consideration and respect for their managers and peers in the workplace, and empathy for the service users with whom they work.
- Apprentices receive very good careers guidance that motivates them to make good progress and increases their enthusiasm for learning. They gain promotion and increased responsibility within their workplaces, and make substantial and sustained progress from their starting points.
- Apprentices develop their English and mathematical skills very well in the workplace, as reflected in exceptionally high first-time pass rates in this element of their apprenticeship programmes.

- Training advisers plan content to include relevant and unforced ways of discussing equality and diversity and British values. These opportunities provide apprentices with a positive model of egalitarian attitudes and how to keep themselves and others safe in the workplace.

## Provider details

Unique reference number	57942
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	1,017
Principal/CEO	Mr Steven Ward
Telephone number	0191 587 4570
Website	<a href="http://www.nct-ltd.co.uk">www.nct-ltd.co.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+
	-	16	-	-	-	20	-	-
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	17	126	4	81	-	17		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	n/a							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	n/a							
Funding received from:	Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractor:	Innolearn							

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of compliance, quality and human resources, 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

Pauline Hawkesford, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Dan Grant	Ofsted Inspector
Philip Pullen	Ofsted Inspector
Catharine Jackson	Ofsted Inspector
Christopher Young	Ofsted Inspector
Stella Owen	Ofsted Inspector

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