

Total People Limited

Community learning and skills

Inspection dates

8–11 May 2017

Overall effectiveness			Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good	16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good	Apprenticeships	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good		
Outcomes for learners	Good		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection			Good

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- The majority of apprentices make good progress and achieve their apprenticeship within the planned timeframe.
- Support for learners and apprentices with multiple and complex barriers to learning is excellent. As a result, they remain on their programmes and achieve their qualifications.
- Most learners and apprentices develop good practical work skills as a result of trainers' and assessors' good understanding of industry standards.
- Good partnerships with employers and stakeholders support leaders and managers effectively in developing curriculums which meet local and national priorities.
- Highly effective management of subcontracted provision results in good-quality apprenticeships and high apprenticeship achievement rates.
- The wide range of high-quality external work experience placements and supported internships ensures that learners on 16 to 19 study programmes develop good personal, social and employability skills.
- Apprentices develop and use their technical skills well and make effective contributions to their employers' businesses.
- Too many learners on 16 to 19 study programmes leave their courses early and do not achieve their qualifications.
- Trainers' and assessors' planning of learning, and checking and monitoring of learners' progress, are not good and impede the progress of the most able learners and apprentices.
- The process for observing teaching, learning and assessment is not rigorous. It does not improve staff's practice or learners' and apprentices' progress.
- Learners' and apprentices' understanding of living in a modern society and of the threats of radicalisation and extremism are not well developed.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Total People Limited (TPL) was acquired by the Learning, Training and Employment group in July 2015. TPL is a national community learning and skills provider. The company provides government-funded training programmes and privately funded training programmes. TPL provides 16 to 19 study programmes, adult learning programmes, apprenticeship and traineeship provision. The company's head office is based in Middlewich, Cheshire; it has training centres in Crewe, Wigan, Macclesfield, Winsford, Telford, Chester and Burslem. TPL works with over 50 subcontractors across England and Wales. The majority of provision is based in the North West.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of learners on 16 to 19 study programmes who stay until the end of their programme and achieve their qualifications.
- Develop learners' and apprentices' understanding of living in a modern society and the threats of radicalisation and extremism and enable them to have a full and active role in society and enable them to protect themselves and others from threats of harm.
- Improve individualised planning for learners and apprentices and the tracking and monitoring of learners' and apprentices' personalised learning goals to ensure that the most able learners and apprentices make the progress of which they are capable.
- Develop the process for observing teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - focusing more rigorously on the learning and progress that learners and apprentices make in order to identify key strength and areas for improvement
 - producing a specific individual staff action plan following each observation of teaching, learning and assessment that links clearly to key areas for improvement
 - monitoring how well staff implement specific actions for improvement so that they all improve their teaching practice to the highest standard.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior leaders, managers and board directors have a clear vision for TPL as a leading provider of work-based learning, mainly through apprenticeship provision and study programmes. The very newly appointed managing director has taken over her role with minimum disruption as a result of skilful succession planning and effective joint working with her outgoing predecessor.
- Members of the senior leadership team, comprising the managing director and three associate directors, have clearly defined roles and responsibilities. They set high expectations for the colleagues they manage. Staff appraisal is systematic and it focuses specifically on the quality of the contributions that staff at all levels make to the company.
- Senior managers have a detailed knowledge of apprenticeship reforms and the impact those reforms will have on employers, apprentices and TPL. Managers' business planning is good and takes full account of the published changes and possible future developments in apprenticeship provision. They are aware of the financial uncertainties as a result of the reforms and their approach to financial management is prudent and carefully thought through.
- Senior leaders and managers have a good record of integrating apprentices recruited originally by other training providers into TPL. They managed the transfer of apprentices from three failed training providers very efficiently. A large majority of those who reached the end of their planned learning period with TPL completed their apprenticeship successfully.
- Senior managers have developed good working relationships with a large number of subcontractors that they commission to deliver all, or part of, selected apprenticeship programmes. They only recruit those subcontractors who complete a thorough commissioning process successfully, after which they monitor the quality of their work regularly. For example, managers are working in partnership with two subcontracted colleges very successfully to provide engineering programmes to apprentices, a significant number of whom are employed by a local manufacturer of prestigious motor cars.
- New members of staff follow a thorough induction programme which helps them to become familiar with the company's processes, procedures and expectations. Training for TPL and subcontractor staff is good.
- Senior leaders and managers review the provision periodically and ensure that it is responsive to local, regional and national priorities. In response to local enterprise partnership (LEP) priorities, TPL have launched apprenticeships very successfully in human resource management, and for digital industries. They are also committed to, and have adopted enthusiastically, apprenticeship Trailblazer standards, for example for software developers, installation electricians and dual smart-meter installers.
- Senior managers contribute effectively to policy-making and keep up to date with relevant thinking and current developments through their membership of external networks, boards and committees whose primary focus is work-based learning and employment. For example, they are members of the Cheshire and Warrington provider network, the Cheshire and Warrington LEP skills and employment board, and the Cheshire and

Warrington Rail Skills Board.

- Senior managers are committed to improving the quality of provision for all learners. However, self-assessment reports are insufficiently incisive. They do not always identify accurately key strengths and key areas for improvement. Consequently, this hinders managers' attempts to improve the quality of provision.
- Managers have not taken sufficient action to ensure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is consistently good throughout the provision. Although observation reports of teaching, learning and assessment are detailed, they do not focus sufficiently on what learners are learning and on their progress. Where reports identify areas for improvement, managers do not routinely set or monitor systematically actions to help staff to improve their teaching practice.
- Managers' priorities for ensuring that all staff, apprentices and learners improve their English, mathematical, and information and communication technology knowledge and skills are good. However, the measures for evaluating the extent to which the identified priorities are met are not precise enough.

The governance of the provider

- The board of directors consists of nine members with wide-ranging and relevant professional and industrial experience. They bring a diverse range of expertise, including financial, legal, accountancy and human resource knowledge, to the board. Directors have a good understanding of work-based learning and the importance of apprenticeships for equipping learners with vocational knowledge, skills and understanding to enable them to make significant contributions to local, regional and national economies. The directors meet four times a year to review a range of relevant strategic and operational matters, for example the financial situation and national apprenticeship developments. They receive detailed quarterly reports on safeguarding concerns.
- Board directors receive information on overall achievement rates but it is not presented in sufficient detail. As a result, they are not able to make the necessary comparisons and to challenge managers when underperformance occurs, as for example on the study programme. Board directors do not receive sufficient information about the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to enable them to challenge senior leaders and managers and help them bring about significant improvements rapidly.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Managers and staff give a high priority to safeguarding. They assess risk and take appropriate action to prevent harm to apprentices, learners and members of staff. All new employees are checked appropriately before they start working for the company. The single central register, giving details of disclosure checks and other relevant information about staff and contractors, is extremely comprehensive and reviewed regularly.
- The application of relevant procedures and processes protect learners, apprentices and staff from harassment, bullying, discrimination and unfair treatment. Apprentices know about the correct reporting procedures if safeguarding issues arise. Safeguarding concerns are reported promptly and acted upon swiftly by the safeguarding team. The

safeguarding team meets regularly. Safeguarding training for staff, which includes coverage of signs of abuse and actions to take, is good. All new staff have good online and face-to-face safeguarding training and assessment as part of the induction process.

- The promotion of health and safety and safe working practices is effective. Apprentices and learners have a basic awareness of extremism and radicalisation but their understanding is not well developed.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Most learners and apprentices develop good practical work skills as a result of trainers' and assessors' skilful coaching and training. Learners following 16 to 19 study programmes benefit from practising their skills in a range of settings and confidently seek the expert advice of trainers, assessors and subject specialists. For example, learners involved in a local theatre project develop their technical skills and knowledge through participating in workshops and mentoring by theatre staff. Hairdressing apprentices competently and efficiently carry out skin testing and foil testing on clients, clearly articulating their understanding of contraindications and health and safety.
- Apprentices and learners enjoy their learning. Their positive attitudes to learning and the probing questioning techniques used by trainers and assessors effectively support the development of learners' and apprentices' skills, knowledge and understanding. In most lessons, innovative activities motivate learners, enabling them to make good progress. For example, in business administration sessions, apprentices develop greater accuracy in accounting skills as they identify hidden ledger errors or develop spreadsheets to improve day-to-day business operations.
- Apprentices' and learners' portfolios are of good quality, well organised and demonstrate that learners and apprentices take pride in their work. Portfolios clearly show the progress they make over time. Apprentices benefit from regular reviews of their progress. Most employers contribute well to reviews, which helps them to understand apprentices' strengths and areas requiring development. For example, in catering and hospitality, employers frequently rotate apprentices across different areas of the kitchen. Apprentices who excel in their catering skills benefit from additional training in areas such as confectionery.
- Staff skilfully support learners, both in sessions and in the workplace, to help them develop their skills and make good progress. Assessment at the start of learners' and apprentices' programmes accurately identify individuals' support needs. For example, staff provide resources such as printing on coloured paper for learners who have dyslexia or personalised assessment arrangements.
- Learners with high needs benefit from teaching that helps them to achieve realistic and relevant targets, based on a thorough understanding of their individual needs. For example, learners with mental ill-health and significant personal and complex problems value their involvement in a local council project. Learners use art effectively to develop their communication skills by producing short film clips which promote local services and attractions.
- Assessors encourage equality and celebrate diversity well. Assessors ensure that activities and discussions are relevant to the workplace and, as a result, apprentices successfully

apply what they learn to their own workplace practice.

- Learners and apprentices receive good support to develop their spoken English. Learners in an English class confidently discussed the wife of a politician's farewell speech as an example of effective persuasive language. However, trainers and assessors do not routinely develop learners' and apprentices' English and mathematics skills in other sessions. They do not consistently provide feedback that helps learners and apprentices improve their work. Trainers do not support learners well enough to identify and correct their mistakes in spelling, punctuation and grammar. Consequently, learners continually repeat errors.
- Planning for teaching, learning and assessment does not consistently meet the needs of the most able learners. Teachers do not use information about learners' progress well enough to plan learning that is challenging for the most able. As a result, a small minority of learners do not make the progress of which they are capable.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- Learners and apprentices enjoy their programmes and are very positive about their learning. They demonstrate good standards of behaviour, tolerance and respect in sessions and the workplace. They are proud of their work and, as a result, standards of most practical and written work are good.
- Learners and apprentices develop good personal and social skills which support them well in the workplace and in preparing for work. Learners and apprentices demonstrate effective communication, team-building and problem-solving skills in classes and in the workplace.
- Apprentices develop their confidence and self-esteem as they become more proficient in their vocational skills. As a result, they make highly effective contributions to the workplace, which are valued by their employers.
- Learners benefit from a wide range of additional activities which develop personal, social and employability skills well. For example, learners enjoy and learn from activities such as sessions on preparing for work, budgeting and money management classes and volunteering.
- Support for learners' and apprentices' welfare and well-being is excellent. Staff skilfully provide help for learners and apprentices with multiple and complex barriers to learning. Learners and apprentices benefit from outstanding welfare support, coaching and mentoring to help them stay on their programmes. Swift referral to external agencies such as those specialising in tackling drug and alcohol misuse or financial difficulties ensures that learners and apprentices have access to appropriate expert advice and guidance.
- Apprentices have a growing understanding of equality and diversity and how they can apply this in their work. For example, they challenge co-workers who make inappropriate comments about colleagues.
- Learners feel safe and are kept safe. They know to whom they should report any concerns they may have. Learners and apprentices receive effective teaching about health and safety, which enables them to adopt and demonstrate safe working practices. Although learners and apprentices have a basic awareness of the threats of radicalisation

and extremism, they do not have sufficient understanding of how this relates to current affairs or their everyday lives.

- Most learners on 16 to 19 study programmes benefit from a wide range of high-quality, well-structured and meaningful external work experience. As a result, they develop good personal, social and employability skills. However, learners do not always receive good impartial careers guidance to help them plan for their next steps in education, apprenticeships or employment.
- The majority of learners and apprentices do not have a well-developed understanding of living in a modern society. For example, many learners and apprentices who could vote are not aware of the purpose of elections or the need to register to be eligible.
- Attendance in a few sessions is low. This results in a small minority of learners and apprentices not keeping up with their work and, consequently, making slower progress over time.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- Achievement rates for the apprenticeship programme, which is the largest provision at TPL, are high and above those of similar providers nationally. The majority of apprentices complete their apprenticeships within the planned timescales. Achievement rates for intermediate apprentices aged 16 to 18 declined in 2015/16 to slightly below that of other providers nationally, due to a significant number of apprentices losing their jobs when an information and communications technology (ICT) company went into liquidation suddenly. Current ICT intermediate apprentices aged 16 to 18 are making good progress. Present indicators suggest that the achievement rate for intermediate ICT apprentices in the current year will be significantly higher than in 2015/16.
- Apprentices develop a good range of vocational skills, knowledge and understanding, which is supported well by the training they receive from trainers and assessors. For example, business administration apprentices gain an in-depth understanding of legislation relating to data protection, employment rights and the protected characteristics of employees.
- Managers carefully and regularly monitor and analyse the performance of different groups of learners and apprentices. Where managers identify underperformance, they successfully implement actions to reduce achievement gaps. Care leavers, children looked after and vulnerable learners achieve as well as their peers. Managers have identified accurately that learners and apprentices who have learning disabilities or difficulties do not achieve as well as their peers and have a range of actions in place to reduce this gap. However, these actions have not yet had good enough impact in improving retention or achievement rates of this group of learners.
- Managers assiduously track the destinations of learners and apprentices who complete their programmes and of those that leave their programmes early. Most 16 to 19 study programme learners who complete their programmes progress to higher-level programmes, further education, apprenticeships or employment. Many apprentices gain promotion or extra responsibility in their workplace.
- Too many learners on 16 to 19 study programmes leave their programmes early. The majority of those that remain until the end of their programmes achieve their vocational

qualifications.

- Too few learners on 16 to 19 study programmes achieved English and mathematics functional qualifications in 2015/16. The proportion of current learners who have achieved English and mathematics functional skills qualifications compared to this point in 2015/16 is significantly higher. The proportion of learners who achieved GCSE English and mathematics at grades A* to C in 2015/16 was low. While the majority of learners did not improve their grades, they nevertheless improved their examination marks.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- At the time of inspection, 320 study programme learners were attending courses at entry level, level 1 and level 2. The largest areas of provision are employability, health and social care, childcare, engineering, motor vehicle and construction. TPL and subcontractors provide courses for study programmes.
- Leaders and managers have implemented a suitable range of initiatives to improve the quality of provision. However, these have not yet had sufficient impact.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment varies considerably across subject areas and is not yet good. Planning for learning does not always meet the individual needs of learners. Trainers do not use information about learners' starting points or progress over time well enough to plan learning that challenges the most able. Learners complete the same work regardless of their ability and, as a result, the most able learners do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Targets set for learners are not consistently effective. Targets for a large minority of learners are too general and lack specificity. Too few trainers routinely identify learning targets in order for learners to develop a greater understanding of the vocational topics they study. As a result, a minority of learners do not achieve their full potential.
- Feedback to learners following assessment is not sufficiently specific to help learners improve their work. Feedback confirms that work meets criteria but does not systematically challenge learners to develop their skills to a higher level.
- Careers guidance is not consistently good across all subject areas to enable all learners to make fully informed decisions about their next steps in education, apprenticeships or employment.
- Learners benefit from good assessment of their starting points in English and mathematics. Trainers use the results accurately to place learners on the correct level of study. However, trainers do not always develop learners' English and mathematics skills well enough. For example, a minority of learners rely on trainers to complete mathematical calculations in lessons and do not receive enough help in identifying and correcting errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Most trainers skilfully support learners, both in and outside of sessions, to help them develop their skills and make good progress. Learners' positive attitudes to learning and the probing questioning techniques used by trainers and assessors effectively support the development of learners' skills, knowledge and understanding. In most lessons, innovative

activities motivate learners, enabling them to make good progress.

- Learners produce good-quality work. Their portfolios are well organised and learners take great pride in their work. Portfolios clearly show the progress that learners make over time.
- Learners who need extra help in sessions benefit from effective support from trainers and support staff to help them stay on programme and achieve their qualifications. Resources such as computers help learners gain independence and make progress.
- Support for learners with high needs is well coordinated. Transition to TPL is good and specialist support meets learners' individual needs very well. Learners are proud of their achievements and improve their confidence, team-working and communication skills.
- Most learners benefit from a wide range of high-quality, well-organised, external work experience and supported internships. Consequently, learners make good progress in developing personal, social and employability skills. Learners develop confidence and demonstrate effective communication skills, team-building and problem-solving skills through a wide range of enrichment activities.

Apprenticeships

Good

- At the time of inspection, 3,952 apprentices were in training. There are 1,730 intermediate apprentices and 1,940 advanced apprentices. Trailblazer apprenticeships account for 171 apprentices. The largest apprenticeship areas are health and social care, childcare, business administration engineering, manufacturing and retail and commercial services. TPL and over 50 subcontractors deliver the apprenticeships.
- Trainers and assessors have high expectations of their apprentices and, as a result, the majority of apprentices make good progress and complete their apprenticeships in the time planned.
- Well planned on- and off-the job training meets the requirements for apprenticeship provision. Apprentices enjoy their training. They appreciate the importance and relevance of acquiring the knowledge and skills which underlie their work and successfully apply them to their practice in the workplace. For example, health and social care apprentices develop a good understanding of the importance of accurate referrals, which they use effectively when working with service users with mental health difficulties.
- Apprentices demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of safe working practices in the workplace. They have a good understanding of health and safety requirements because of the good practice which staff model. For example, childcare apprentices handle babies safely.
- Apprentices make effective contributions to their employers' businesses. For example, a hospitality apprentice ran a section of a restaurant swiftly and efficiently while developing good team-working skills with staff. Employers value the contributions that learners make to their businesses.
- Most apprentices apply their good understanding of equality and diversity in the workplace. For example, social media apprentices show high levels of respect, consider the values of others and demonstrate tolerance.
- Assessors do not use information about apprentices' starting points well enough. Target-

setting and assessment, for the most able apprentices, are not challenging or specific enough to accelerate apprentices' progress or encourage them to think for themselves. Targets set by assessors focus too much on unit completion rather than the development of skills and knowledge. Consequently, a small minority of apprentices do not make the progress of which they are capable.

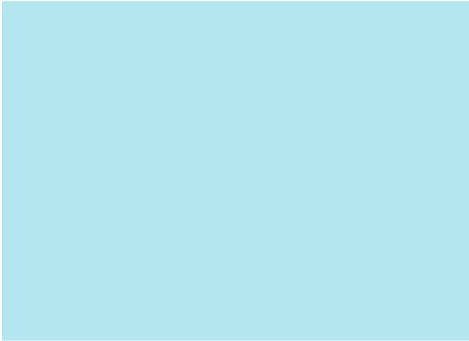
- Trainers and assessors do not routinely develop apprentices' mathematical and English skills, which results in apprentices continually repeating errors. For example, trainers and assessors were unaware that construction apprentices made the same mistakes in calculating estimates over a prolonged period.

Provider details

Unique reference number	55022
Type of provider	Community learning and skills
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	7,221
Managing Director	Linda Dean
Telephone number	01606 734000
Website	www.totalpeople.co.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)	278	165	42	128	0	10	0	0
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	717	1137	687	1161	35	215		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	13		5		18			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	N/A							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	17							
Funding received from:	Education and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Floortrain GB Limited ■ Estio Training Limited ■ Mantra Learning ■ Care Assessment Training Services ■ Kids Allowed Academy ■ The Juice Academy 							

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- Utilities Academy
 - North of England Training
 - Barley Associates
 - Just Childcare
 - KMF
 - South Cheshire College

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the associate director, 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

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