

L.I.T.S Ltd

Reinspection monitoring visit report

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REINSPECTION MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Context and focus of visit

L.I.T.S. Limited (LITS) is a private training provider working predominantly with employers in the lift industry. LITS' head office is near Orpington, Kent and it delivers support and assessment nationally. All learners are recruited by employers and have been enrolled either on an apprenticeship or a Train to Gain programme. Approximately 40% of LITS' training is funded by the Skills Funding Agency.

The most recent inspection report was published in June 2011. LITS was graded as inadequate in overall effectiveness, capacity to improve, outcomes for learners, quality of provision and leadership and management. This report focuses on the themes explored during the visit.

Themes

Self-assessment and improvement planning

What progress has been made in improving provision through the self-assessment and quality assurance processes?

Insufficient progress

At the previous inspection, the effectiveness of self-assessment in improving the quality of provision was judged to be inadequate. LITS' latest self-assessment report of December 2011 continues to judge self-assessment and quality assurance to improve the quality of provision as inadequate.

LITS has taken advantage of external consultants to support its improvement plan and to advise the organisation on ways to take the provision forward. The recent quality improvement plan has been well developed and is clearly linked to the inspection findings. LITS has introduced a quality calendar in order to take a more robust approach towards the monitoring and review of the quality of provision. The actions that are now in place involve a significant redevelopment of key processes and procedures across much of the provision. However, LITS recognises that such fundamental changes have taken longer to develop than initially anticipated. Many actions are in the early stages of implementation and some of them show positive early indications. For example, changes to assessment practice gives learners improved opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding. However, overall, there has been little impact on improving the provision through the self-assessment process and the latest self-assessment report overstates the improvements made to success rates since the previous inspection.

Outcomes for learners

What progress has LITS made in improving success rates?

**Reasonable
progress**

For the two years between 2008 and 2010, apprenticeship success rates were well below the engineering national average. By the time of the last inspection, success rates had improved and, by August 2011, were at the national average. However, a recent decision by one employer to withdraw all of its employees from completing their training with LITS, despite many being close to completion, will adversely affect the overall final year success rates for 2010/11.

In 2009/10, Train to Gain success rates were significantly below the engineering national average. By the time of the last inspection, success rates had much improved but were still well below the national average. Success rates have continued to improve and between August and December 2011, success rates recorded by LITS within the agreed time were high.

Since the previous inspection, LITS has assessed the reasons why some learners fail to achieve within the agreed time and has developed a centrally based system to track and monitor more effectively learners' progress. However, it is too early to assess the impact of these actions.

Quality of provision

What progress has been made in improving assessment practice?

**Reasonable
progress**

At the previous inspection, the assessment of learners' work was judged to be inadequate, with the range of assessment methods limited to an over-reliance on written evidence. Since then, LITS has updated its assessment strategy effectively and has developed and disseminated clear guidance. The assessment of learners' competence now includes the use of direct observations of learners and witness statements as primary sources of evidence. LITS requires training advisers to organise at least four direct observations as part of the new assessment arrangements. Since the inspection, all advisers have either delivered direct observations or plan to do so in the very near future. Completed records of direct observations are satisfactory. However, assessment feedback to learners is in some cases insufficiently detailed to support them fully in developing their competence and skills.

What progress has been made in improving the review of learners' progress and the setting of challenging targets?**Insufficient progress**

At the time of the monitoring visit, two training advisers were piloting a new review form with a group of apprentices. The new forms now include sections for comment by learners on discussions that take place with regard to equality and diversity, safeguarding, and progress towards completion of key skills and the technical certificate. Training advisers now record, in percentage terms, the learner's progress towards the completion of functional/key skills, health and safety, and equality and diversity.

Of the few pilot progress reviews that have taken place, further improvements have been recommended by an external consultant. For example, the setting of challenging targets is insufficiently developed or clear. Although, targets are now more specific, they tend to focus mainly on completion of the National Vocational Qualification. LITS does not always link employer feedback sufficiently to the content of the review process. The development of the progress review process for Train to Gain learners will take place following completion of the apprenticeship pilot.

What progress has been made in developing improvements reasonable to initial assessment and support for literacy and numeracy?**Reasonable Progress**

At the previous inspection, the arrangements to identify and provide literacy, numeracy and language support were judged to be weak. Since then, LITS has developed and introduced a Skills for Life strategy. The strategy is appropriate to the needs of learners and offers clear guidance to staff on how to support learners' literacy, numeracy and dyslexia needs more effectively.

LITS has raised the overall literacy and numeracy entry criteria. Where learners achieve a score for a component part of the initial assessment which is below that of the agreed criteria, for example in writing, LITS has introduced more detailed assessments and learning resources. These additional assessments will identify any specific areas for improvement and then offer learners appropriate and tailored learning resources. The planning of individual learners' literacy and numeracy support, based upon initial assessment results, is not sufficiently clear.

Since the previous inspection, all new learners complete an assessment of their literacy, numeracy and dyslexia needs at the start of the programme. Training advisers have recently received awareness training on how to recognise and support learners who show signs of dyslexia.

Leadership and management**What progress has been made in improving safeguarding arrangements?****Reasonable progress**

At the previous inspection, safeguarding arrangements were judged to be inadequate. Safeguarding arrangements now meet current legal requirements. LITS has updated its safeguarding policy, vets all training staff appropriately and maintains a central register of Criminal Records Bureau and all other statutory checks. All staff have taken part in a variety of safeguarding training since the last inspection and have either completed or are currently engaged in online safeguarding training. The company's designated safeguarding officer has completed specific training and further training is booked.

Clearly displayed safeguarding posters contain information and contact details of the company's designated safeguarding officer. LITS has now issued all apprentices with a safeguarding booklet. Learners are aware of the increased focus on monitoring their safety. However, records from the newly introduced progress reviews do not make sufficiently clear what safeguarding discussions take place between training advisers and learners. While the company's code of conduct clearly highlights the safeguarding of all learners, the policy has limited focus on the protection of vulnerable adults.

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