

# TQ Workforce Development

## Focused monitoring visit report

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**Type of provider:** Independent learning provider

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## **FOCUSED MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS**

### **Context and focus of visit**

TQ Workforce Development (TQWD) has offered government sponsored programmes since 2006. At the time of the previous inspection, in November 2009, TQWD mainly delivered customer service and providing security services National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) to the security industry. TQWD has now added apprenticeship programmes to its offer, increased its skills for life provision significantly and is working with subcontractors to deliver its contract.

At the previous inspection, all aspects of TQWD's provision were satisfactory, including the contributory grades of equality of opportunity and safeguarding. The subject areas of public services and business administration and law were also satisfactory. This report focuses on areas identified for improvement at the previous inspection.

### **Themes**

#### **Self-assessment and improvement planning**

<b>What progress has TQWD made in ensuring that quality improvement arrangements are consistently applied across all aspects of the provision?</b>	<b>Reasonable progress</b>
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Key changes to improve the consistency of quality improvement arrangements since the previous inspection include the restructuring of the quality team by providing better support, mentoring and coaching to assessors and the prioritisation of staff training to enable TQWD to meet its changing provision. Additionally, the percentage of staff with teaching qualifications has doubled to 60%. Staff are still actively involved in the self-assessment process; however, TQWD acknowledge the continued need to improve the involvement of employers. The self-assessment report is self-critical and identifies appropriate areas for improvement. However, it does not include an evaluation of the quality of teaching and assessment and their influence on learning. Managers regularly monitor the quality improvement plan to measure improvements. TQWD's increased emphasis on the observation of teaching, training and assessment is not sufficiently reflected in its policies and procedures and observers are not adequately trained. Observations contribute to staff appraisal but are insufficiently collated to support self-assessment or identify staff development requirements across the organisation. TQWD's subcontracting arrangements are in their early development. However, the provider has taken appropriate measures to assure itself that subcontractors meet their minimum standards and is auditing and monitoring their practices.

## Outcomes for learners

**What progress has TQWD made in improving learners' outcomes since the previous inspection?**

**Reasonable progress**

Overall outcomes for Train to Gain provision were satisfactory at the previous inspection with some variability between subject areas but low success rates for learners completing within the planned end date. Success rates continued to be low for those learners in 2009/10. However, in 2010/11 success rates for this provision improved substantially. Both retention and achievement improved, with success rates for learners achieving within the planned period 12 percentage points above the national average. This pattern is reflected in success rates of different subject areas. Both sports, leisure and recreation and preparation for life and work saw a significant increase in success rates in 2010/11 after a decline in the previous year, whilst health and social care and business administration have seen a steady and consistent improvement in success rates to high levels in 2010/11. In year data, at this early stage of the programme, shows high retention for the apprenticeship programme but slightly lower success rates for learners achieving within the planned period in NVQs. However, with a new and substantial apprenticeship programme and a significant proportion of provision newly subcontracted, it is too early to judge whether high success rates can be achieved and sustained.

## Quality of provision

**What progress has TQWD made in improving the early stages of the programme, particularly the time that learners wait between signing up for the NVQ and their first assessor visit?**

**Reasonable progress**

At the previous inspection, learners experienced delays in joining the programme, in some cases leading to loss of motivation. Many assessors had excessive workloads and line managers within companies were reluctant to release learners for training and assessment. TQWD has reorganised and improved the enrolment, induction and assessment arrangements. The learner engagement team, administration and assessors work very closely to reduce the time learners have to wait for the assessors' first visit. Learners receive useful guidance on the structure of qualifications, electronic portfolios and the use of electronic learning materials to improve their knowledge while they wait for the assessor's visit. Many more learners now complete their qualifications within the planned timescale. With simplified administration processes, learners have a better understanding of the programme. Learners make informed choices and prioritise their learning after receiving valuable initial advice and guidance.

**What progress has TQWD made in improving employers' understanding of the programme?**

**Significant progress**

At the previous inspection, line managers in the workplace did not have a sufficient understanding of the requirements of the qualifications learners were working towards. Many did not contribute sufficiently to the planning, assessment and progress reviews of their learners. TQWD has transformed the situation. Strategic and operational managers in workplaces now have detailed knowledge of learners' needs and qualifications. They work very closely with the assessors to release learners from work and provide learning and assessment opportunities to ensure that they complete their qualifications within the planned time.

A newly appointed commercial director has worked closely with the employers to raise the profile of work-based learning, to help them maximise the extensive benefits of work-based learning. TQWD monitors the progress of learners closely and keeps employers fully informed. Employers identify substantial benefits from the training to both learners and their business. TQWD involves employers in regular, often informal, evaluation of the training and acts promptly to make improvements to the provision where required.

**What progress has TQWD made in improving planning for literacy and numeracy?**

**Reasonable progress**

In 2009, inspectors judged that TQWD did not adequately meet the identified literacy and numeracy needs of learners on customer service programmes. To redress this, TQWD has improved the capacity of its staff to provide necessary support. All assessors and engagement team staff have achieved intermediate level qualifications in literacy and numeracy and now have a greater appreciation of the subjects. TQWD also appointed a skills for life manager who provides valuable support and guidance to all team members through newly acquired electronic media and audiovisual resources. Assessors use their knowledge and skills well to support learners with literacy and numeracy needs, although the TQWD does not keep records of the effect of such support.

Assessors make better use of findings from initial and diagnostic assessment to help learners focus on those areas that will enable them to progress faster. Assessors correct apprentices' work to encourage them to raise standards. However, insufficient use is made of real-life incident reports to develop learners' awareness and skills. In the last two years, TQWD has increased substantially the achievement of qualifications of those learners receiving support for literacy and numeracy.

## Leadership and management

**What progress has TQWD made in improving aspects of equality and diversity, particularly in analysing, identifying and improving the achievement of different groups of learners?**

**Reasonable progress**

TQWD monitors the achievement of different groups well. Since the previous inspection, TQWD has increased the recruitment of minority ethnic learners and maintained that of female learners. No significant differences exist in the achievement of different groups. Male and female success rates have been similar for the last three years. TQWD has also closed the achievement gap between some minority ethnic groups and white British learners and those for learners with declared disabilities and other learners.

TQWD has appointed an equality champion who has updated the equality and diversity question bank and has revamped the company's brochures. However, available information on equality and diversity, for instance from observation records, are not collated and disseminated to make improvements. In line with good practice the equality champion carries out impact assessments on new policies and procedures however, an equality action plan has only recently been introduced. Since the previous inspection, TQWD has provided general update training in equality and diversity for the majority of staff and most board members. However, it has not provided sufficient training on promoting equality and diversity within learning.

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