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Ms C Dunn
Head of Learning CALAT
London Borough of Croydon Adult and Community Learning
Taberner House
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Dear Ms Dunn

Ofsted 2011–12 survey inspection programme: employability - the impact of skills programmes for adults on achieving sustained employment

This survey evaluates providers' response to initiatives launched on 1 August 2011 to use Skills Funding Agency funds flexibly to support people on benefits.

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and participants, during my visit on 30 and 31 January 2012 to look at your work in employability provision.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with staff and participants; scrutiny of relevant documents; analysis of participants' work; and observation of three learning sessions and initial assessment and guidance sessions.

Key findings

- The London Borough of Croydon's Adult Learning and Training (CALAT) has developed a wide range of courses for unemployed adults that supports its key priorities well. Participants' current and future development needs are met particularly well and course take-up is very high. Participants have good opportunities to develop their confidence in literacy, numeracy and language skills alongside vocational and employability skills.
- In the observed teaching and learning sessions, tutors promoted and reinforced work-related skills and professional standards very effectively. Participants developed good communication and teamworking skills.

Participants on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses gained a wider vocabulary relevant to applying for jobs, which they used confidently when speaking and writing. Participants regularly receive constructive feedback from tutors about their progress which improves their confidence in their own ability.

- CALAT has developed good links with public sector employers, who they consult with when designing courses. Most of CALAT's vocational courses incorporate work-placements which give participants highly relevant occupational experiences and learning. However, the number of employers offering work-placements is declining and CALAT works with only a few from the private sector.
- Staff discuss participants' learning needs, their motivation and barriers in detail. CALAT provides good pastoral, practical and support in literacy and numeracy that enables participants to learn effectively. Participants have appropriate personal and learning goals, but these rarely include career goals.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- agreeing and setting with participants their career goals and actions to address barriers to employment
- working with a wider range of employers to involve them more in course design and support participants with work experience, work trials and enrichment.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop employability provision at London Borough of Croydon.

As explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. A copy of this letter is also being sent to the Skills Funding Agency.

Yours sincerely

Janet Rodgers
Her Majesty's Inspector